

Volume 7

ŚRĪ RĀMA CARITA MĀNASA
Of
Gōswāmī Tulasīdās

Canto 7: Uttara-Kāṇḍa

Original Text, English Transliteration &
Exhaustive Exposition in English with Explanatory Notes

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Presented By:--

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia
Ayodhya (Faizabad, U.P.)

Full address of Author—36-A, Rajghat Colony, Parikrama Marg,
P.O.—Ayodhya, Pin—224123
Distt.—Faizabad, U.P. India.
Mobile: +919451290400, +919935613060

Website: < www.tulsidas-ram-books.weebly.com >

Email of Author: (i) < ajaichhawchharia@gmail.com >

(ii) < ajaikumarbooks@gmail.com >

Facebook ID < www.facebook.com/ajaikumarchhawchharia8 >

Linkedin: www.linkedin.com/AjaiKumarChhawchharia

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Language: English.

NOTE:

This English rendering of the epic Book 'ŚRĪ RĀMA CARITA MĀNĀSA' of Goswami Tulsidas is in 7 Volumes.

The present volume no. 7 has the Seventh and the Last Canto of the Book: viz. Uttar Kand.

The rest of the volumes in this series are as follows:-

Volume 1: Ram Charit Manas, Canto 1: Baal Kand

Volume 2: Ram Charit Manas, Canto 2: Ayodhya Kand

Volume 3: Ram Charit Manas, Canto 3: Aranya Kand

Volume 4: Ram Charit Manas, Canto 4: Kishkindha Kand

Volume 5: Ram Charit Manas, Canto 5: Sundar Kand

Volume 6: Ram Charit Manas, Canto 6: Lanka Kand

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Uttara-Kāṇḍa

Original Text in Hindi + English Transliteration + Exhaustive Exposition in English with Explanatory Notes:—

(1) Invocation : Shloka line nos. 1-4.

(2) Lord Ram and his companions arrived at Ayodhya from Lanka aboard the airplane known as Pushpak; the city of Ayodhya erupted in joy as the news spread of the Lord's arrival; the Lord received a tumultuous welcome from euphoric citizens, led by his younger brother Bharat, who rushed out to receive him; after meeting everyone individually, Lord Ram entered the city ahead of a procession that got a rousing reception as it slowly wended its way to the royal palace where the Lord met his mothers and other members of the family; the companions of Lord Ram were introduced to sage Vasistha and other senior ministers; the city of Ayodhya was decked-up in bridal finery, with festivities galore, to celebrate Lord Ram's homecoming : Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 1—to Doha no. 11.

(3) Soon, Lord Ram was anointed as the King-Emperor of the great and powerful kingdom-cum-empire of Ayodhya with great fervour and enthusiasm that overwhelmed the city; Lord Ram's friends who had come with him from Lanka aboard the air-plane, as well as the gods, great sages, elders of the society, and large numbers of illustrious people of different denominations had attended the Lord's coronation ceremony at that time amidst chanting of Mantras of the Vedas, offering of prayers by different gods, and different types of religious festivities and celebrations that were organized to mark this auspicious occasion: Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 12—to Doha no. 15.

(4) In due course of time, Lord Ram bid farewell to his friends who had come along with him aboard the Pushpak plane from Lanka. Then we read about the excellent way Lord Ram established the 'rule of law' in his kingdom, which became famed and renowned throughout the world as "Ram Rajya", i.e. 'the Government of the Kingdom and the Empire of Ayodhya during the exemplary Reign of Lord Ram as its King and Emperor', making the Lord's reign a benchmark and a gold-standard of good governance and administration, where the 'rule of law' based on the principles of Dharma (the virtues righteousness, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, ethics, morality, and goodness of thought and conduct) was honoured and strictly observed,

where good virtues and excellence in all spheres of life were the norm, and where Lord Ram ruled his subjects in a most judicious manner, with a lot of compassion, mercy, kindness and consideration incorporated in all his actions and deeds. The result was that the subjects of his kingdom were happy and joyful as they lived a prosperous and contented life; there was dearth of nothing, and abundance of everything, and the kingdom thrived and prospered in all possible manners : Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 16—to Doha no. 31.

(5) After the initial days of celebrations and festivities that were observed upon Lord Ram's returning home and his coronation ended and life returned to its daily routine, Lord Ram would hold regular meetings or congregations where he would preach everyone, including his brothers, courtiers, as well as his subjects in general, about the great principles of Dharma, Spiritualism, Metaphysics, Theology etc., which benefited everyone who listened to the Lord's discourses : Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 32—to Doha no. 47.

(6) During those days, the celestial sages Sankadi and Narad, as well as sages Agastya and Vasistha, came to offer their obeisance and pray to Lord Ram separately on different occasions : Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 48—to Doha no. 51.

(7) Lord Shiva concluded his narration of the divine Story of Lord Ram in the manner as described in this Book called the 'Ram Charit Manas' by summarising its glories, spiritual values and the countless benefits obtained by hearing, reading, reciting and discoursing on this holy Book to his listener goddess Uma, his consort; she had so thoroughly enjoyed this holy Story of Lord Ram that she wanted to continue to listen to more of it, so she devised an excuse by asking her husband to tell her more about the saintly crow Kaagbhusund from whom Lord Shiva had said that he had heard the narration of Ram Charit Manas on some previous occasion : Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 52—to Doha no. 57.

(8) In order to answer Uma's query, as well as to filter out and specially highlight the profound spiritual, metaphysical and theological principles and values that are incorporated in and form an integral part of the narration of the divine and holy Story of Lord Ram for the benefit of everyone in this world, Lord Shiva narrated to her in detail the event where Garud, the heavenly mount of Lord Vishnu and the king of the bird kingdom, had gone to Kaagbhusund to first hear the Story of Lord Ram and then seek answers and clarifications to the many questions that had confused his mind and befuddled his intellect so that he can have eternal mental peace and spiritual fulfillment : Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 58—to Doha no. 62.

(9) What follows next came to be known as the famous episode called the "Kaagbhusund Ramayan", wherein many important topics pertaining to spiritual, metaphysical and theological principles and philosophies have been expounded upon and elucidated in detail, in an easy and simple-to-understand way, by the saintly crow Kaagbhusund for the benefit of Garud; this discourse is comparable to the Upanishads that are parts of the Vedas as both have a similar intent, for their aim is to explain these principles and philosophies for the benefit of spiritual aspirants and seekers of truthful knowledge : Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 63—to Doha no. 125.

(10) Finally, Lord Shiva once again highlights the glories, the holiness, the spiritual importance and the profundity of the divine Story of Lord Ram as narrated in the Book ‘Ram Charit Manas’; he praises those who read and listen to its narration, briefly lists some kind of people who are not eligible to be told the Story of Lord Ram, as well as the many spiritual benefits that are got by hearing and listening to its narration; Uma was thrilled and euphoric after patiently hearing this narration, and she thanked Lord Shiva profusely for granting her eternal spiritual joy and fulfillment by narrating the entire story to her in vivid detail : Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 126—to Doha no. 129.

(11) The Book ‘Ram Charit Manas’ ends with Goswami Tulsidas— the saint-poet who had made this Holy Book available to us in the current form by writing it in his own inimitable style, a way that has endeared the Book to countless souls who look unto it for their spiritual peace, solace and succour— offering his personal obeisance and greatest of respects to his beloved Lord Ram, and simultaneously seeking the Lord’s grace and mercy for his spiritual well-being, stressing the fact that there is no living being in this world who has not benefited by offering prayers to the Lord, and by worshipping and having devotion for him : Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 126—to Doha no. 130.

With this we come to the end of this classical, magnificent Book called the ‘Ram Charit Manas’, that was penned by the saintly poet Goswami Tulsidas, in which is narrated in vivid detail the epic Story of the Ramayana that describes the life and time of Lord Ram, who was an incarnation of the Supreme Being, as well as the many deeds done by the Lord during his stay on this earth as a human being. This narrative stands out amongst the many different versions of the Ramayana known to us because of its high devotional quotient and its profound spiritual and metaphysical messages that are cleverly incorporated in its basic structure, as well as in the style of narration itself that touches and stirs the heart of its readers and listeners alike for the simple reason that it employs melodious poetry, that can be recited and sung with equal charm and spiritual rewards, as the basic framework for the narration of the epic Story of Lord Ram.

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ŚRĪ RĀMA CARITA MĀNASA
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Gōswāmī Tulasīdās

Canto 7: Uttara-Kāṇḍa

Preface

Lord Ram had sent Hanuman as his messenger to inform Bharat about the Lord's arrival before the Pushpak plane actually landed in Ayodhya. As soon as Bharat was informed of the good news of Lord Ram's coming home, he was absolutely thrilled with joy, and he immediately went to the city, from his hermitage located on the outskirts, to inform everybody of the Lord's homecoming. As soon as this good news spread like wildfire in the city, it erupted in joy, and there was a thunderous applause that reverberated in all corners. As swiftly as was possible, the whole city was decked-up for the occasion, and a large crowd of jubilant citizens accompanied Bharat as they headed to the outskirts where Lord Ram was to descend from the skies aboard his airplane. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 1—to Doha no. 3.}

No sooner the plane was sighted in the sky, but a resounding cheer rose up in the rank and file of the assembly. Slowly the Pushpak plane landed on the ground and Lord Ram disembarked from it, accompanied by his wife Sita and his brother Laxman by his side, as well as by the many friends of the Lord who had come along with him from Lanka, such as Vibhishan, Sugriv, Hanuman, Angad, Nala, Neel, Jamvant and others. Lord Ram received a rousing welcome from euphoric citizens who had been anxiously waiting for this auspicious moment for fourteen long years. Lord Ram and his brothers met each other most affectionately; then Bharat and his younger brother Shatrughan paid their respects to Sita. Observing that the people were very eager to meet and express their affection to him at a personal level, Lord Ram performed a miracle of sorts whereby he assumed countless forms to affectionately embrace each single individual who had come to welcome him, and ask about his welfare. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 4—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 6.}

After the initial welcome and exchanging of pleasantries, the Lord headed a procession of exuberant citizens to return home to his city of Ayodhya. Slowly, the procession wended to the royal palace where Lord Ram met his waiting mothers and other members of the family. The companions of Lord Ram were introduced to sage Vasistha and other senior ministers, and they exchanged pleasantries. Meanwhile, the city of Ayodhya was decked-up in bridal finery, and there were mass festivities and widespread celebrations everywhere to mark this auspicious and happy occasion. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 6—to Doha no. 11.}

Soon, at an auspicious date and time, Lord Ram was anointed on the throne as the King-Emperor of powerful and great kingdom-cum-empire of Ayodhya with great fervour and enthusiasm that descended upon the city, and it reminded one of the happy days of yore when Ayodhya was envied by even the gods of heaven for its beauty, charm, prosperity and liveliness, where every day seemed to be a day of festivity and celebration. Lord Ram's coronation was a landmark event in the annals of ancient history, and it was attended by one and all, from the humblest of creatures to those who were great, powerful and honourable. All the gods, the great sages of the time, Lord Ram's friends who had come with him from Lanka aboard the air-plane, as well as the elders of the society, and large numbers of illustrious as well as common people of different denominations had attended the Lord's coronation ceremony amidst chanting of Mantras of the Vedas, offering of prayers by the gods, and different types of religious festivities and ceremonies that were organized to mark this auspicious occasion. Liberal alms were distributed and charities were made on that occasion. Everyone, without exception, was exhilarated and jubilant to see their beloved Lord Ram on the throne of Ayodhya. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 12—to Doha no. 15.}

In due course of time, Lord Ram bid farewell to his friends who had come along with him aboard the Pushpak plane from Lanka, with a commitment that they would remain his friend for life, and that they should feel free to come to visit him whenever they so wished. Everyone was given personal gifts and a warm send-off. However, Angad had been very reluctant to go back as he felt a deep bond of nearness and emotional attachment with Lord Ram that rivaled only that of Hanuman's, but the Lord explained the situation to Angad and the necessity of his returning to his own kingdom of Kishkindha as he was its prince and an heir to its throne. The Lord also assured Angad that he had a special place in the Lord's heart that was reserved for him, and that he need not lament or regret to return home thinking that he was away from the Lord, for the Lord would always be there with him at a subtle and ethereal plane of existence. Only Hanuman remained behind in the service of Lord Ram at Ayodhya. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 16—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 20.}

After the days of ceremonies, festivities and celebrations surrounding Lord Ram's coronation ended, life returned to its routine way. Then we read about the excellent way Lord Ram established the 'rule of law' in his kingdom, which became famed and renowned throughout the world as "Ram Rajya", meaning 'the Government of the Kingdom and the Empire of Ayodhya during the exemplary Reign of Lord Ram as its King and Emperor', making it a benchmark and a gold-standard of good governance and administration, where the rule of law based on the principles of Dharma (the virtues righteousness, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, ethics, morality, and goodness of thought and conduct) was honoured and strictly observed, where good virtues and excellence in all spheres of life were the norm, and where Lord Ram ruled his subjects most judiciously, with a lot of compassion, mercy, kindness and consideration incorporated in all his actions and deeds. The result was that the subjects of his kingdom were happy and cheerful as they lived a prosperous and contented life; there was dearth of nothing and abundance of everything, and the kingdom thrived and prospered in all possible manners. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 20—to Doha no. 31.}

Meanwhile, Lord Ram would hold regular meetings or congregations where he would preach everyone, including his brothers, courtiers, as well as his subjects in general, about the great principles of Dharma, Spiritualism, Metaphysics, Theology etc., which benefited everyone who listened to the Lord's discourses. These sessions endeared the Lord to every single person in his kingdom as they looked upon him not only as their dearest Lord and King, but also as their friend, guide, advisor and teacher who cared for their spiritual and moral well-being as much as he cared for their physical welfare, comfort and happiness. We read about two such discourses, one in which Lord Ram preached on the characters of saints and non-saints*1, and the other on the importance and significance of the virtue of Bhakti (devotion)*2. Even the great sages and the creator Brahma would benefit from these discourses*3.

{Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, *1 = Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 36—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 42.

*2 = Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 43—to Doha no. 47.

*3 = Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede Doha no. 42.}

On different occasions during these days, the sages Sankadi and Agastya*4, as well as Vasistha*5 and Narad*6, had visited Lord Ram to offer their obeisance to the Lord and pray to him.

{Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, *4 = Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 32—to Doha no. 35 (Sankadi and Agastya);

*5 = Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 48—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 50 (Vasistha);

*6 = Doha no. 50—to Doha no. 51 (Narad).}

Lord Shiva concluded his narration of the divine Story of Lord Ram in the manner as described in this Book called the 'Ram Charit Manas' by summarising its glories, spiritual values and the countless benefits obtained by hearing, reading, reciting and discoursing on this Holy Book to his listener goddess Uma, his consort. Uma felt exhilarated and fulfilled. But she wanted to continue to listen to more of it, and thereby hear more of Lord Ram's glories, holiness and divinity from Lord Shiva, so she asked her husband about the saintly crow Kaagbhusund from whom Lord Shiva had said that he had heard the narration of Ram Charit Manas. Uma expressed her wonder that a 'crow' would be so highly enlightened, wise, self-realised and a blessed devotee of Lord Ram that Lord Shiva would choose to hear the Story of Lord Ram from him. She wondered what was so special with Kaagbhusund and his narration that Lord Shiva, who is credited with the original conception and the first narration of the story of Ram Charit Manas, would be feeling so compelled to go and listen to him, and then feel emotionally contented and spiritually fulfilled after attending the discourse given by Kaagbhusund? Hence, Uma asked Lord Shiva to describe to her this aspect in detail. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 52—to Doha no. 57.}

In order to answer Uma's query, as well as to filter out and specially highlight the profound spiritual, metaphysical and theological principles and values that are incorporated in and form an integral part of the narration of the divine and holy Story of Lord Ram for the benefit of everyone in this world, Lord Shiva narrated to her in detail the event where Garud, the heavenly mount of Lord Vishnu and the king of the bird kingdom, had been greatly confused about the holiness, divinity and supremacy

of Lord Ram just like Uma had herself been prior to her listening the narration of Ram Charit Manas from her husband, Lord Shiva. Garud had approached the creator Brahma, and then sage Narad to find a solution to his vexations that had robbed him of his peace of mind and had caused immense emotional turmoil for him. Narad advised Garud to meet Lord Shiva and seek his guidance. When Garud approached Shiva, the latter advised him to go and listen attentively to the narration of the Story of Lord Ram from the saintly crow Kaagbhusund at the latter's hermitage, as it would remove all his delusions, as well as grant him eternal mental peace and spiritual fulfillment. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 58—to Doha no. 62.}

What follows next came to be known as the famous episode called the “Kaagbhusund Ramayan” that forms the concluding part of the last Canto no. 7, the Uttar Kand, of the book Ram Charit Manas. The ‘Kaagbhusund Ramayan’ is an exposition by the enlightened, illustrious and wise saintly crow wherein he expounds and elucidates in detail on the many important topics pertaining to spiritual, metaphysical and theological principles and philosophies that are explained by him lucidly in detail, in an easy and simple-to-understand way, for the benefit of Garud.

This discourse is comparable to the Upanishads that are parts of the Vedas as both have a similar intent, for their aim is to explain these principles and philosophies for the benefit of spiritual aspirants and seekers of truthful knowledge so as to enlighten them on these subjects, because these topics have a profound impact on a creature's spiritual well-being, and proper grasp and understanding of these subjects or topics would help the creature to attain peace of mind, spiritual joy and bliss, as well as liberation from all sorts of entanglements that tie down his soul to this mortal gross world of transmigration. This knowledge helps the creature to attain deliverance, emancipation, salvation, beatitude, felicity, and eternal rest for his soul.

The ‘Upanishads’, also known as Vedanta, curate and filter the profound spiritual, metaphysical and theological principles and laws that are an integral part of the Vedas, the ancient scriptures, and present them in a more comprehensive and collated form for the benefit of spiritual aspirants and seekers of Truth. The ‘Kaagbhusund Ramayan’ too follows the same pattern and the same principle of the Upanishads by not only bringing out the essential spiritual messages, the glorious metaphysical and theological principles, as well as the values of Dharma that are contained as an integral part of the text of the holy book known as the ‘Ram Charit Manas’, but also present them in a curated and easy to understand-and-follow format so that every spiritual aspirant and seeker can implement these principles and philosophies in his or her life, and reap their attendant rewards.

The entire ‘Kaagbhusund Ramayan’ is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 63—to Doha no. 125.

Finally, Lord Shiva once again highlights the glories, the holiness, the spiritual importance and the profundity of the divine Story of Lord Ram as narrated in the Book ‘Ram Charit Manas’. He also praises those who read and listen to its narration, briefly lists some kind of people who are not eligible to be told the Story of Lord Ram, as well as the many spiritual benefits that are got by hearing and listening to its narration. Uma was thrilled and euphoric after patiently hearing the narration of the

divine Story of Lord Ram, and she profoundly thanked Lord Shiva for being gracious enough to grant her eternal spiritual joy and fulfillment by narrating the entire story to her in vivid detail. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 126—to Doha no. 129.}

The Book ‘Ram Charit Manas’ ends with Goswami Tulsidas— the saint-poet who had made this Holy Book available to us in the current form by writing it in his own inimitable style, a way that has endeared the Book to countless souls who look unto it for their spiritual peace, solace and succour— by offering his personal obeisance and greatest of respects to his beloved Lord Ram, and simultaneously seeking the Lord’s grace and mercy for his spiritual well-being, stressing the fact that there is no living being in this world who has not benefited by offering prayers to Lord Ram, and by worshipping and having devotion for the Lord. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 126—to Doha no. 130.}

With this we come to the end of this classical narration of the Story of Lord Ram in a magnificent way in the form of this most revered Book called the ‘Ram Charit Manas’. It was originally conceived in the mind and heart of Lord Shiva, then was passed on by the oral tradition through a chain of illustrious narrators and devoted listeners, until it was penned in the present age of Kaliyug by the saintly poet Goswami Tulsidas who had heard it from his guru. This gradual transition from one illustrious soul to another enabled this Holy Book to come down to us in its present form. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 30—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 31.}

We therefore owe our sincere gratitude to the poet-saint Tulsidas as he has made this Book called ‘Ram Charit Manas’— which is like a virtual pitcher containing an ambrosia of spiritual bliss and joy that also serves to grant solace and succour to tormented souls suffering from so many causes in this mortal world of grossness and delusions— available to all of us ordinary souls, who otherwise would have missed this gold-mine of spiritual peace, blissfulness, beatitude and felicity. In it is narrated in vivid detail the epic Story of the Ramayana that describes the life and time of Lord Ram, who was an incarnation of the Supreme Being, as well as the many deeds done by the Lord during his stay on this earth as a human being. This narrative stands out amongst the many different versions of the Ramayana known to us because of its high devotional quotient, together with its profound spiritual and metaphysical messages that are cleverly incorporated in its basic structure, as well as in the style of narration itself that touches and stirs the heart of its readers and listeners alike for the simple reason that it employs melodious poetry, that can be recited and sung with equal charm, with its accompanying spiritual rewards, as the basic framework for the narration of the epic Story of Lord Ram.

I hope my esteemed reader had enjoyed reading this magnificent and charming Story of Lord Ram as narrated in the Book ‘Ram Charit Manas’, which is at once fascinating as much as it is spiritually fulfilling for one and all. I have tried my best to make it easily readable and comprehensible by using ordinary and simple language, and have also added exhaustive notes to enlighten the reader about many things that any inquiring mind would like to know in the normal course of things.

I submit this effort of mine, with a bowed head, at the holy feet of Lord Ram whom I love more than I myself can ever imagine, and whose grace and blessings and affection for me are the only factors that have enabled me to complete this gigantic task single-handedly. I have written this Book 'Ram Charit Manas' in English as my humble offering to 'my Ram', as an expression of my gratitude and thanks to him for whatever he has done for me in my life, which nevertheless are countless and beyond compare. Words are totally incompetent to express the emotions that pour out of my heart, and I find myself absolutely inept to butt and bound the ocean of joy and happiness that overwhelms me today when I realize the profundity of the task that Lord Ram has enabled me to accomplish successfully.

I must acknowledge that when I started work on this project of writing an English exposition on Ram Charit Manas, I was completely at sea when the gigantic and profound nature of the work that stood before me like a huge barrier that seemed insurmountable. Had it not been for Lord Ram's benevolence and grace, as well as his encouragement throughout the period I worked on this Book, I would have surrendered somewhere midway in despair. That this Book actually came into being is a living proof, at least for me, to show how the Lord gets his work done even from the most incompetent person whom he had selected for his work, and decides that this person alone would do it over all other candidates inspite of all the odds stacked against him. It's indeed the greatest of privilege and honour to be able to serve the Lord in a humble way, and this service makes the Lord's servant feel fulfilled and contented in all possible ways.

Amen!

Author: Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia.

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Canto 7: Uttara-Kāṇḍa

Original Text, English Transliteration &
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सप्तम सोपान
(उत्तरकाण्ड)

ŚrīRāmaCaritaMānasa

saptama sōpāna

(uttara-kāṇḍa)

श्लोक

केकीकण्ठाभनीलं सुरवरविलसद्विप्रपादाब्जचिह्नं
शोभाढ्यं पीतवज्रं सरसिजनयनं सर्वदा सुप्रसन्नम् । १ ।
पाणौ नाराचचापं कपिनिकरयुतं बन्धुना सेव्यमानं
नौमीड्यं जानकीशं रघुवरमनिशं पुष्पकारूढरामम् ॥ २ ॥

ślōka.

kēkīkaṇṭhābhanīlaṁ suravaravilasa-dviprapādābjacihnaṁ
śōbhāḍhyaṁ pītavastraṁ sarasija-nayanaṁ sarvadā suprasannam. 1.
pāṇau nārāca-cāpaṁ kapinikarayutaṁ bandhunā sēvyamānaṁ
naumīḍyaṁ jānakīśaṁ raghuvaramaniśaṁ puṣpakārūḍharāmam. 2.

Invocation

{Shloka nos. 1-3 are dedicated to Lord Ram, while Shloka no. 4 is dedicated to Lord Shiva.}

‘I offer my obeisance to and bow my head before Lord Ram whose glowing complexion has a hue similar to the charming colour of a peacock’s neck (kēkīkaṇṭhābhanīlaṁ); who is the most exalted and honourable amongst the gods

(suravara); whose chest is adorned by the footprints of sage Bhṛigu (which is marked on the chest of the Lord and is worn by him as a sort of jewel that one would sport on one's chest); who is an embodiment of majesty, charm and magnificence (śōbhāḍhyaṁ); who wears a yellow silk cloth that is known as 'Pitambar' (and which is a trademark apparel of Lord Vishnu; "pītavastraṁ"); whose eyes are like that of a lotus flower (sarasija-nayanam); who remains in eternally happy and blissful state (sarvadā suprasannam); --- (Shloka line no. 1)

--- Who holds a strong bow and an infallible arrow in his hands (i.e. in the left and the right hand respectively; "pāṇau nārāca-cāpaṁ"); who is being served by devoted monkey warriors as well as by his faithful brother Laxman (kapinikarayutaṁ bandhunā sēvyamānam); who is worthy of being worshipped, adored, honoured and shown reverence to (naumīḍyaṁ); who is a dear husband of Janki (i.e. Sita; "jānakīśaṁ"); who is the most exalted Lord in the illustrious family of king Raghu of Ayodhya (raghuvaramaniśaṁ); and who is aboard the airplane called Pushpak (puṣpakārūḍharāmam)¹. (Shloka line no. 2)

[Note—¹We must remember that this introductory prayer is being offered to Lord Ram at the time when he approaches Ayodhya aboard the Pushpak plane from Lanka.]

कोसलेन्द्रपदकञ्जमञ्जुलौ कोमलावजमहेशवन्दितौ ।
जानकीकरसरोजलालितौ चिन्तकस्य मनभृङ्गसङ्गिनौ । ३ ।

kōsalēndra-padakañjamañjulau kōmalāvajamahēśa-vanditau.
jānakīkarasarōja-lālitau cintakasya manabhṛṅga-saṅginau. 3.

The two holy feet of Lord Ram, who is the King of Kaushal (another name for Ayodhya), are charming and tender like the lotus flower, and they are worshipped by both Brahma, the creator, and Lord Shiva, the concluder of this creation (kōsalēndra-padakañjamañjulau kōmalāvajamahēśa-vanditau).

The holy feet of Lord Ram are always served by Janki (Sita) personally, for she always ensures that the Lord is served affectionately by her with her own lotus-like hands (jānakīkarasarōja-lālitau).

Likewise, the holy feet of Lord Ram are the center of affection and reverence as well as a favourite haunt for worshippers whose minds meditate and remain focused on the Lord's holy feet as it grants them bliss and joy, much like the bee that hovers over a lotus flower with its attention fixed on the flower and the nectar that it contains as the sight of the flower gives the bee immense sense of joy and happiness, and the hope of deriving bliss by being able to imbibe the flower's nectar (cintakasya manabhṛṅga-saṅginau). [To wit, the worshipper remains engrossed in the thoughts of Lord Ram and keeps his mind fixed on the Lord's holy feet, as it gives the worshipper an immense feeling of bliss and joy.] (Shloka no. 3)

कुन्दइन्दुदरगौरसुन्दरं अञ्जिकापतिमभीष्टसिद्धिदम् ।
कारुणीककलकञ्जलोचनं नौमि शङ्करमनङ्गमोचनम् ॥ ४ ॥

kunda'indudara-gaurasundaram̐ ambikāpatim-abhīṣṭa-sid'dhidam.
kāruṇīkakala-kañjalōcanam̐ naumi śaṅkaram-anaṅgamōcanam. 4.

I pay my obeisance, bow my head, and offer worship to Lord Shiva (naumi śaṅkaram) whose complexion is charming and fair like a jasmine flower, radiant like the moon, and smooth and well-formed like a conch shell (kunda'indudara-gaurasundaram̐); he who is the dear Lord and husband of goddess Parvati, the Mother Goddess of this creation (ambikāpatim); he who grants all boons and fulfills all the desires of his devotees and worshippers (abhīṣṭa-sid'dhidam); he who is easily moved by the sufferings of humble creatures, and by those who are distressed, miserable and tormented, so much so that he would show mercy, grace and kindness on such creatures (kāruṇīkakala); he whose eyes are as beautiful as the lotus flower (kañjalōcanam̐); and who had vanquished the haughtiness and arrogance of Kamdeo (the god of passion; “anaṅgamōcanam”)¹. (Shloka no. 4)

[Note—¹This incident of Lord Shiva vanquishing Kamdeo has been narrated in detail in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 82—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 88.]

दो०. रहा एक दिन अवधि कर अति आरत पुर लोग ।
जहँ तहँ सोचहिं नारि नर कृस तन राम बियोग ॥ क ॥
dōhā.

rahā ēka dina avadhi kara ati ārata pura lōga.
jaham̐ taham̐ sōcahir̐ nāri nara kṛsa tana rāma biyōga. a .

One day was left before the exact period of 14 years (during which Lord Ram was to live in the forest in accordance to the word given by him to his late father king Dasrath) would finally come to end.

The anxious citizens of Ayodhya, both the males and the females, were extremely eager to see the Lord back home by that time. They had all been so overcome with grief and sorrows during the Lord's long absence that they had become weak in their bodies and fidgety in their minds, especially because there was apprehension as to what would happen now if the Lord did not return in time¹. (Doha-a)

[Note—¹When Lord Ram was on his way to the forest 14 years ago, the citizens had become overwhelmed with grief and sorrows at that time too. They had abandoned the prosperous city of Ayodhya and their own comfortable homesteads with a firm determination to follow the Lord and live wherever he decides to live in the forest. But since this was impractical, and it would cause a lot of problems to the citizens themselves, so Lord Ram was forced to, much against his will and with a heavy heart, devise a way to leave the grief-stricken citizens while they were sleeping during the

night, and quietly move ahead into the forest on a path which they wouldn't be able to follow.

Remorse and pain of separation descended the subjects like a heavy mist of grief when they discovered in the morning that the Lord was nowhere to be found. Crestfallen, distraught, forlorn and broken in heart, the poor citizens had no option but to return to Ayodhya and somehow wait for the period of 14 years to end, for they were so sure of Lord's words that they knew for certain that even if the heaven and hell break loose from their moorings, Lord Ram can never rescind on his words that he would be back in Ayodhya just when the period of 14 years ended, which made them absolutely sure that the Lord would be with them after this period.

But this was a painfully long and a burdensome wait, and though the citizens had been left with no other choice but to go through the needs of routine life, yet they did it mechanically like someone dumb and deaf is yoked to a plough. The nearer the end of the period 14 years approached, the greater became their anxiety and eagerness and nervousness. The only talk was about Lord Ram's arrival; everyone was on the lookout for any news of the Lord. Bharat must have surely appointed spies all along the route which the Lord was in all probability to take, the same path which Bharat himself had traveled on his way to and back from Chitrakoot. But as of date, there was no news. This exacerbated the people's anxiety and made them very apprehensive. No one could guess that Lord Ram was coming by the aerial route; there was no way they could have known it.

Surely then, when the news of the Lord's arrival was actually conveyed to Bharat by Hanuman, and then by Bharat to the citizens, there must have been a spontaneous and tumultuous applause, and a thunderous cry of joy that reverberated in all the directions as the city and its inhabitants became excited and thrilled when the good news of the Lord's arrival reached them.

Meanwhile, auspicious signs heralding good times were discernible, and those who were wise and sagacious in these matters could see that it meant positive tidings. They comforted the grieving people and assured them that Lord Ram was sure to come.]

सगुन होहिं सुंदर सकल मन प्रसन्न सब केर ।

प्रभु आगवन जनाव जनु नगर रञ्ज चहुँ फेर ॥ ख ॥

saguna hōhim sundara sakala mana prasanna saba kēra.
prabhu āgavana janāva janu nagara ramya cahum̐ phēra. b.

Auspicious signs and good omens appeared in abundance, portending lucky tidings¹. Seeing them filled the heart of everyone with joy and happiness.

These positive signs were very encouraging, and they were indicating to the citizens that Lord Ram was soon to arrive. The city of Ayodhya, which was hitherto gloomy and overcast with a thick mist of grief, too appeared to suddenly become pleasant and charming in all its directions (as if the sun of good hope had emerged from behind a bank of dark cloud symbolizing hopelessness and helplessness)². (Doha-b)

[Note—¹Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-6 that precede Doha no. 7.

²Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 3.]

कौसल्यादि मातु सब मन अनंद अस होइ ।
आयउ प्रभु श्री अनुज जुत कहन चहत अब कोइ ॥ ग ॥

kausalyādi mātu saba mana ananda asa hō'i.
āya'u prabhu śrī anuja juta kahana cahata aba kō'i. c.

Mother Kaushalya and others¹ felt extremely exhilarated in their hearts. They felt that anytime now some messenger would come to them with the good news that Lord Ram has arrived with his wife Sita and younger brother Laxman². (Doha-c)

[Note—¹King Dasrath had three queens; the chief was Kaushalya, the mother of Lord Ram, and the other two were Sumitra, the mother of Laxman and Shatrughan, and Kaikeyi, the mother of Bharat.

²A similar scene is narrated in Geetawali Ramayan, Lanka Kand, verse nos. 17-20.]

भरत नयन भुज दच्छिन फरकत बारहिं बार ।
जानि सगुन मन हरष अति लागे करन बिचार ॥ घ ॥

bharata nayana bhuja dacchina pharakata bārahim bāra.
jāni saguna mana haraṣa ati lāgē karana bicāra. d.

Meanwhile, the right arms and eyelid of Bharat began fluttering repeatedly¹. Realising that these were auspicious signs and lucky omens, Bharat felt joyful in his heart. He began thinking as to what it means. (Doha-d)

[Note—¹The fluttering of different parts of the body is regarded as good or bad sign depending on which part flutters. For men, the fluttering of right side of the body is considered auspicious and good, while for a woman the reverse is true, i.e. the fluttering of the left side of her body is regarded as good.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 231; (b) Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-7 that precedes Doha no. 7.]

चौ०. रहेउ एक दिन अवधि अधारा । समुझत मन दुख भयउ अपारा ॥ १ ॥
कारन कवन नाथ नहिं आयउ । जानि कुटिल किधौं मोहि बिसरायउ ॥ २ ॥
अहह धन्य लछिमन बड़भागी । राम पदारबिंदु अनुरागी ॥ ३ ॥
कपटी कुटिल मोहि प्रभु चीन्हा । ताते नाथ संग नहिं लीन्हा ॥ ४ ॥

caupāī.

rahē'u ēka dina avadhi adhārā. samujhata mana dukha bhaya'u apārā. 1.
 kārana kavana nātha nahim āya'u. jāni kuṭila kidhaurm mōhi bisarāya'u. 2.
 ahaha dhan'ya lachimana barābhāgī. rāma padārabindu anurāgī. 3.
 kapaṭi kuṭila mōhi prabhu cīnhā. tātē nātha saṅga nahim līnhā. 4.

Realising that only one day was left for completion of 14 years, Bharat felt very sad; his heart and mind were overcome with extreme anxiety, worry and grief. (1)

He pondered poignantly: 'What is the reason why Lord Ram has yet not arrived? Is it possible that it because he perceived me to be wicked and scheming in my heart¹, and therefore the Lord decided to forsake me; has he decided to get me off his mind and memory, and just forget me altogether? (2)

Ah! How fortunate and lucky has Laxman been that he has had extreme affection for the lotus-like feet of the Lord². (3)

Surely the Lord discerned me to be wicked and evil in my heart, false and pervert, and this is the reason why the Lord did not take me along with him further on in his journey into the forest³. (4)

[Note—¹Bharat's deep sense of regret, grief and sadness are evident in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand. Some of the verses that give a comprehensive picture of the intensity of his remorse and sense of guilt are the following: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Doha no. 160; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede Doha no. 164; (iii) Chaupai line no. 4 that precede Doha no. 167—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precede Doha no. 168; (iv) Doha no. 177—to Doha no. 183.

²Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 182; and Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 200 where Bharat is all praises for Laxman and his good fortune that he decided to discard everything else to serve Lord Ram selflessly.

³Bharat has said the same thing earlier too in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 205.

When Bharat had gone to Chitrakoot in an attempt to bring Lord Ram back to Ayodhya, he had offered that if the Lord thinks it not wise to return as it would violate the words he had given to his late father, then let it be so. But Laxman was not bound by any such vows; so Bharat offered an option: why not send Laxman back home, and in his place Bharat would accompany the Lord for the remaining period in the forest. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 268 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that follow it.}

So therefore, Bharat laments woefully, with a lot of remorse in his grief-stricken heart: "I am sure that it is this reason why the Lord took Laxman along with him, and decided not to entertain my pleas when I requested him to come back to Ayodhya, or take me along with him on his onwards journey into the forest. The Lord knew that Laxman loved him and was dedicated to him more than I was; nay, the Lord realized that I was wicked and scheming in my heart. Is it not obvious—because was it not due to me that the Lord had to go to the forest in the first place, as my wicked mother Kaikeyi had devised this nasty plan all on her own, as I had nothing to do with it, so that I could ascend the throne and be a king of Ayodhya? Woe to me

and my ill mother and my doomed fate! I can't and won't ever be able to convince the Lord that I am not guilty."

Bharat's sense of remorse, regret and guilt are expressed by him in explicit terms on previous occasions also, such as when he laments that he has no doubt that it is he who is at the center of all the misfortunes that have befallen on the kingdom and which culminated in Lord Ram being sent to the forest: apropos—Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3 and 5 that precede Doha no. 179.]

जौं करनी समुझै प्रभु मोरी । नहिं निस्तार कलप सत कोरी ॥ ५ ॥
जन अवगुन प्रभु मान न काऊ । दीन बंधु अति मृदुल सुभाऊ ॥ ६ ॥

jauṁ karanī samujhai prabhu mōrī. nahim nistāra kalapa sata kōrī. 5.
jana avaguna prabhu māna na kā'ū. dīna bandhu ati mṛdula subhā'ū. 6.

Should the Lord take into account my doings (and the horrible mischief perpetrated by my evil mother in the fallacious belief that she is furthering my imaginary interests), then there is no chance of my ever getting redemption even in countless cycles of my births and deaths (i.e. for eternity)¹. (5)

[But I am sure it is not that way, for I know very well the nature of my dear brother that—] The lord does not mind the faults and shortcomings of his devotees and servants; it is because he is extremely and absolutely kind, compassionate, benevolent, gracious and forgiving by his very nature. Verily indeed, without gainsay and in all sooth, he is also a dear friend of those who are meek and lowly because of inherent nature which is very kind and sweet². (6)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 179 along with Chaupai line nos. 3-5 that precede it.

To wit, Bharat says that if one were to decide his fate merely on physical developments, without considering whether or not he was guilty of any misdoings, what were his internal feelings towards Lord Ram, and how much he has lamented and grieved due to these developments to which he was not a party at all, and which he had tried to remedy in the best possible way he could think of though he could not undo the fiat of fate, then there is no doubt that he would be doomed and condemned forever.

But still there is hope for him, and this hope lies in the stellar nature of Lord Ram which he knew by experience to be most kind, gracious, compassionate, merciful, loving, benevolent, magnanimous, munificent, forgiving and tolerant. Bharat was certain that Lord Ram would embrace him and never abandon him, no matter what comes.

His confidence in this regard is clear when he tells Lord Ram in Chitrakoot that he knows how much the Lord loves him—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precede Doha no. 260. Here Bharat says that during their childhood days, the Lord would lose a game in order to make Bharat win it, as this win would make Bharat rejoice, and Bharat's cheerful countenance would in turn make Lord Ram himself rejoice! What more proof is needed of how much the Lord loved Bharat.

²A similar idea is expressed by Bharat himself in unequivocal terms earlier too—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 3-6 that precede Doha no. 183; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 4-6 that precede Doha no. 234; (iii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 260; (iv) Chaupai line nos. 4-6 that precede Doha no. 299.]

मोरे जियँ भरोस दूढ़ सोई । मिलिहहिं राम सगुन सुभ होई ॥ ७ ॥
बीतें अवधि रहहिं जौं प्राणा । अधम कवन जग मोहि समाना ॥ ८ ॥

mōrē jiyam̐ bharōsa dūr̐ha sō'ī. milihahim̐ rāma saguna subha hō'ī. 7.
bītēm̐ avadhi rahahim̐ jaur̐m prānā. adhama kavana jaga mōhi samānā. 8.

‘I am confident and absolutely certain that’, said Bharat to himself, ‘Lord Ram would meet me (or, conversely, I will meet him) as there are ample good omens and auspicious signs indicative of it¹. (7)

If I live beyond the time limit set for the Lord’s return (which is exactly 14 years from the day he departed for the forest), then all the woes befall upon me, for then there would be no one as contemptible and despicable and sinful as me.² (8)

[Note—¹Refer: Doha line nos. b to d herein above.

Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 234.

²Bharat was overcome with surging waves of intense grief and insurmountable remorse. He was in such an emotional state of mind, and on edge, that he clung to all signs of hope that Lord Ram would return in time that he could think of. The good omens and auspicious signs which he perceived filled his heart with positive hope, but soon apprehension took the better hold of him and he began to think negatively.

It was a virtual roller-coaster emotional drive for Bharat: in one instant he was on the crest of a wave of joy because his long wait for the Lord’s return was about to come to an end and there were ample signs of Nature that good news was in the offing, but soon he descended into a deep trough of sadness and depression when apprehension of something going unexpectedly wrong pulled him down and dashed his hopes.

This mental state of uncertainty is seen earlier also when Bharat was heading to meet Lord Ram at Chitrakoot. At one instant he would walk briskly towards Lord Ram’s hermitage as he was certain that the Lord would come rushing to embrace him as soon as he hears that Bharat has come, and the next instant he felt gloomy and forlorn as he apprehended that when the Lord hears that Bharat was approaching his hermitage, he would immediately leave it and go somewhere else in order to avoid meeting Bharat.

This above emotional state of Bharat is clearly stated in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 233—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 234.]

दो०. राम बिरह सागर महुँ भरत मगन मन होत ।
बिप्र रूप धरि पवन सुत आइ गयउ जनु पोत ॥ १ (क) ॥

बैठे देखि कुसासन जटा मुकुट कृस गात ।

राम राम रघुपति जपत स्रवत नयन जलजात ॥ १ (ख) ॥

dōhā.

rāma biraha sāgara maham̐ bharata magana mana hōta.

bipra rūpa dhari pavana suta ā'i gaya'u janu pōta. 1 (a).

baiṭhē dēkhi kusāsana jaṭā mukuṭa kṛṣa gāta.

rāma rāma raghupati japata sravata nayana jalajāta. 1 (b).

In the symbolic ocean of grief and sorrows caused by separation from Lord Ram, Bharat's mind was violently wobbling, tossing and spinning around as if it was about to sink in it, when Hanuman, the son of the wind god, came to Bharat disguised as a young Brahmin student. His arrival was like a boat that comes to help a drowning man by the latter's good fortune, for it immediately provided succour and solace to the sinking spirits of Bharat. (Doha no. 1-a)

Hanuman found Bharat sitting on a mat of reeds; his matted hairs were coiled on the top of his head like a crown, and his body was emaciated. He (Bharat) was constantly repeating the name of Lord Ram, muttering 'Ram-Ram' incessantly, and tears rolled down his eyes in an endless stream¹. (Doha no. 1-b)

[Note—¹A similar portrait of Bharat is described elaborately in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 324—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 326.]

चौ०. देखत हनूमान अति हरषेउ । पुलक गात लोचन जल बरषेउ ॥ १ ॥

मन महुँ बहुत भाँति सुख मानी । बोलेउ श्रवन सुधा सम बानी ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

dēkhata hanūmāna ati haraṣē'u. pulaka gāta lōcana jala baraṣē'u. 1.

mana maham̐ bahuta bhām̐ti sukha mānī. bōlē'u śravana sudhā sama bānī. 2.

When Hanuman saw Bharat, he was extremely delighted; his body became thrilled and tears of joy rolled down his eyes.*

[*This verse can be read in another way too as follows: "No sooner did Bharat see Hanuman than he felt extremely exhilarated; his body was thrilled and a stream of tears rolled down from his eyes." But taking into consideration what follows next, this interpretation does not fit in well. So therefore, the interpretation in the main text herein above should be regarded as the correct one.] (1)

He (Hanuman) felt extremely delighted in his heart and mind (Mana), and spoke words that were very sweet and pleasant to hear as if they were soaked in ambrosia. (2)

जासु बिरहँ सोचहु दिन राती । रटहु निरंतर गुन गन पाँती ॥ ३ ॥

रघुकुल तिलक सुजन सुखदाता । आयउ कुसल देव मुनि त्राता ॥ ४ ॥

jāsu biraham̐ sōcahu dina rātī. raṭahu nirantara guna gana pāmī. 3.
raghukula tilaka sujana sukhadātā. āya'u kusala dēva muni trātā. 4.

Hanuman said to Bharat: 'The Lord (Sri Ram) for whom you lament so much, whose glories and virtues you constantly remember, that Lord who is the most exalted in the line of illustrious kings descending from king Raghu (raghukula tilaka), and the Lord who dispels the torments and worries of gods as well as sages—verily indeed, he has come back safely, hale and hearty. (3-4)

रिपु रन जीति सुजस सुर गावत । सीता सहित अनुज प्रभु आवत ॥ ५ ॥
सुनत बचन बिसरे सब दूखा । तृषावंत जिमि पाइ पियूषा ॥ ६ ॥

ripu rana jīti sujasa sura gāvata. sītā sahita anuja prabhu āvata. 5.
sunata bacana bisarē saba dūkhā. tṛṣāvanta jimi pā'i piyūṣā. 6.

He has vanquished the enemy in the battle-field, and his resounding glories are being sung even by the gods. The Lord is coming along with Sita and his younger brother (Laxman).' (5)

As soon as Bharat heard these pleasant and comforting words, all his grief and sadness vanished as if a thirsty person has found a fount of nectar. (6)

को तुम्ह तात कहाँ ते आए । मोहि परम प्रिय बचन सुनाए ॥ ७ ॥
मारुत सुत मैं कपि हनुमाना । नामु मोर सुनु कृपानिधाना ॥ ८ ॥
दीनबंधु रघुपति कर किंकर । सुनत भरत भेंटै उठि सादर ॥ ९ ॥

kō tumha tāta kahām̐ tē ā'ē. mōhi parama priya bacana sunā'ē. 7.
māruta suta maim̐ kapi hanumānā. nāmu mōra sunu kṛpānidhānā. 8.
dīnabandhu raghupati kara kiṅkara. sunata bharata bhēṭē'u uṭhi sādara. 9.

[When Bharat heard the news of Lord Ram's arrival safely back to Ayodhya, he was overjoyed; the words announcing these good tidings filled Bharat's heart with excess of delight. He asked the messenger who conveyed this good news to him to introduce himself.]

Bharat asked, 'My dear (tāta), say who art thou, and from whence hast thou comest? Verily indeed and without gainsay, the words which thou hast just said are exceptionally dear to me (and to hear which I hadst been longing for so long).' (7)

Hanuman replied, 'Oh an embodiment of grace and kindness (kṛpānidhānā)! Listen, I am the son of the wind god (māruta suta), and my name is Hanuman, the Kapi (literally, a member of the monkey race; maim̐ kapi hanumānā). (8)

I am a humble servant (kiṅkara) of Lord Raghupati (Lord Ram, the Lord of the Raghu race) who is a friend of the humble, the lowly, the miserable and the meek (dīnabandhu raghupati).’

As soon as Bharat heard these words, he got up instantly and met Hanuman very reverentially (with great affection in his overjoyed heart). (9)

मिलत प्रेम नहिं हृदयँ समाता । नयन स्रवत जल पुलकित गाता ॥ १० ॥
 कपि तव दरस सकल दुख बीते । मिले आजु मोहि राम पिरिते ॥ ११ ॥
 बार बार बूझी कुसलाता । तो कहूँ देउँ काह सुनु भ्राता ॥ १२ ॥
 एहि संदेस सरिस जग माहीं । करि बिचार देखेउँ कछु नाहीं ॥ १३ ॥
 नाहिन तात उरिन मैं तोही । अब प्रभु चरित सुनावहु मोही ॥ १४ ॥

milata prēma nahim hṛdayam samātā. nayana sravata jala pulakita gātā. 10.
 kapi tava darasa sakala dukha bitē. milē āju mōhi rāma pirītē. 11.
 bāra bāra būjhī kusalātā. tō kahum dē'um kāha sunu bhrātā. 12.
 ēhi sandēsa sarisa jaga māhīm. kari bicāra dēkhē'um kachu nāhīm. 13.
 nāhina tāta urina mairm tōhī. aba prabhu carita sunāvahu mōhī. 14.

Bharat met Hanuman very emotionally and embraced him; his heart overflowed with love and affection for the latter so much so that it seemed to fail to contain it, and this burst of spontaneous emotion revealed itself in a stream of tears of joy that ran out of Bharat’s eyes as well as the thrill that spread over his entire body. (10)

Bharat said, ‘Oh Kapi! By having the good fortune of seeing you all my woes, all my grief and miseries are dispelled forthwith. I am so lucky that I have met someone today who is as dear to Lord Ram as you are (milē āju mōhi rāma pirītē)¹.’ (11)

As he said these words, Bharat was so highly overwhelmed with affection for Hanuman so much so that he repeatedly (embraced him and) asked him about his welfare, saying, ‘Listen my dear brother (sunu bhrātā); tell me what can I give thee today in return of the good news that thou have brought hither to me? (12)

This message of Lord Ram’s safe arrival is so great and welcome a news for me that while pondering over the matter I find myself at a loss to discover anything that is worthy of being given to you as a reward for bringing this glad tidings². [To wit, I don’t know what to grant you as a memorable gift to express my deep sense of thanks to you, and how much I am obliged to you for bringing this good news of the Lord’s safe arrival today.] (13)

My dear (tāta)! I will ever remain indebted to you². Now, I request you to tell me about the Lord and the various deeds that he has done. [Tell me about the developments that took place since our last meeting when you were going back to Lanka with the mountain containing the herb required to revive Laxman. Update me about all that had happened since then.]’ (14)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 3.

²Lord Ram too has expressed similar emotions for Hanuman in Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-7 that precede Doha no. 32.]

तब हनुमंत नाइ पद माथा । कहे सकल रघुपति गुन गाथा ॥ १५ ॥
कहु कपि कबहुँ कृपाल गोसाई । सुमिरहिं मोहि दास की नाई ॥ १६ ॥

taba hanumanta nā'i pada māthā. kahē sakala raghupati guna gāthā. 15.
kahu kapi kabahum' kṛpāla gōsā'īm. sumirahim mōhi dāsa kī nā'īm. 16.

Then Hanuman bowed his head reverentially at the feet of Bharat, and narrated all glorious and meritorious deeds done by Lord Raghupati (Lord Ram)¹. (15)

After hearing out Hanuman, Bharat asked him: 'Say Kapi, did the merciful and gracious Lord was ever kind enough to remember me as a devoted and loyal servant of his?²' (16)

[Note—¹To wit, Hanuman narrated briefly how the war against Ravana was fought and won by Lord Ram, about the appointment of Vibhishan as the new king of Lanka, how Sita was reunited with the Lord, how the Lord boarded the Pushpak plane with his chief commanders of both the demon army and the monkey army as he flew back to Ayodhya, and how, after sending Hanuman to meet Bharat and convey the news of his arrival, the Lord has presently gone back for a while to meet some of his acquaintances in the forest that he missed while coming to Ayodhya in a hurry to meet the deadline of coming back after 14 years of forest exile.

²Sita has asked Hanuman a similar question when the latter had gone in search for her in Lanka; she enquired: "Tell me dear, whether Lord Ram ever remembered me kindly"? Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 14.]

छं०. निज दास ज्यों रघुबंसभूषन कबहुँ मम सुमिरन कस्यो । १ ।
सुनि भरत बचन बिनीत अति कपि पुलकि तन चरनन्हि पस्यो ॥ २ ॥
रघुबीर निज मुख जासु गुन गन कहत अग जग नाथ जो । ३ ।
काहे न होइ बिनीत परम पुनीत सदगुन सिंधु सो ॥ ४ ॥

chanda.

nija dāsa jyōm raghubansabhūṣana kabahum' mama sumirana karyō. 1.
suni bharata bacana binīta ati kapi pulaki tana carananhi paryō. 2.
raghubīra nija mukha jāsū guna gana kahata aga jaga nātha jō. 3.
kāhē na hō'i binīta parama punīta sadaguna sindhu sō. 4.

[Bharat asked Hanuman once again—] ‘Did Lord Ram, who is like a jewel in the illustrious king Raghu’s family, ever remember me as being one of his own (loyal, faithful and devoted) servants?’ (Chaupai line no. 1)

Hearing such modest and humble words of Bharat, Hanuman was overcome with joy even as he fell at Bharat’s feet with a thrill spreading over his body. (Chaupai line no. 2)

Hanuman praised Bharat for his virtues and excellent nature when he thought to himself: ‘Indeed, he whose good nature and excellent virtues have been so lavishly praised by Lord Raghubir (Lord Ram), who is the Lord of the entire world, himself --- (Chaupai line no. 3)

--- What wonder is there then that Bharat would be so exceptionally modest, humble, gracious and courteous, as well as an embodiment of all the divine virtues, as he truly is?’¹ (Chaupai line no. 4)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 231—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 233. In these verses, Lord Ram has praised Bharat and extolled his virtues, declaring that there is no one who is purer in his heart, who possesses better virtues and character, and who is more good natured than Bharat is in this world. Not only Lord Ram, even the gods in the heaven had praised Bharat on this occasion and affirmed his holy nature by way of a unanimous declaration made by them in the form of a voice from the sky.

We read that in Chitrakoot, Lord Ram had praised Bharat and said that he was ready to do what Bharat wished, even if that meant breaking his own vows. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 259; and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede Doha no. 263—to Doha no. 264.}

When we read further the Story of the Ram Charit Manas, we find that Bharat has been lavishly praised by everyone who came in contact with him according to the occasion. For instance, the citizens of Ayodhya, the mothers, the ministers, the sages and guru Vasistha—all had great respect for Bharat and praised him profusely. {Apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-5 that precede Doha no. 184; Chaupai line no. 2 that precede Doha no. 185.}

Then we have the great sage Bharadwaj who had heaped great honours and praises on Bharat when they met while Bharat was on his way to Chitrakoot to try and persuade Lord Ram to return to Ayodhya. {Apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 208—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 210.}

On the way to Chitrakoot, every one of the villagers and ordinary country folk had nothing but praise for Bharat. {Apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 233 along with Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede it, and Chaupai line nos. 1 and 6 that follow it.}

At Chitrakoot itself, we read that the illustrious sage Vasistha was bowled over by Bharat’s devotion and affection for Lord Ram, as well as by Bharat’s humility and excellent virtues. {Apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 257; Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 258; Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 259.}

King Janak had also lauded the excellent character of Bharat when he was informed by messengers about the developments in Ayodhya, and that Bharat had

gone to Chitrakoot to fetch Lord Ram. {Apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 272.}

Once again at Chitrakoot itself, mother Kaushalya had extolled Bharat in glorious terms before king Janak's wife, queen Sunayana, the mother of Sita. {Apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-7 that precede Doha no. 283.}

When king Janak came to know in detail how Bharat had behaved and about his noble character, the king was overwhelmed with respect for Bharat and praised him profusely while discussing the matter with his wife, queen Sunayana. {Apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 288—to {Apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 290.}

To wit, every one who came in contact with Bharat on any occasion, had nothing but praise for him, so therefore there is no wonder here that Hanuman too would be overwhelmed by the holy and virtuous nature, and the excellent and noble character of Bharat.]

दो०. राम प्रान प्रिय नाथ तुम्ह सत्य बचन मम तात ।

पुनि पुनि मिलत भरत सुनि हरष न हृदयँ समात ॥ २ (क) ॥

dōhā.

rāma prāna priya nātha tumha satya bacana mama tāta.

puni puni milata bharata suni haraṣa na hṛdayam samāta. 2 (a).

The overwhelmed Hanuman replied to Bharat: 'Oh Lord (nātha), believe me that you are dear to Lord Ram as his own life. My dear (tāta), honestly I tell you that my words are nothing but the truth (satya bacana mama).'

When he heard these reassuring words that gave him great comfort, the exhilarated Bharat embraced Hanuman repeatedly even as his heart overflowed with emotions of joy and happiness that were so intense and profound by their nature that the heart failed to contain them (and it seemed that the tide of emotions swamped Bharat's entire being)¹. (Doha no. 2-a)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 10 that precedes Doha no. 2 herein above.

Lord Ram was very eager to be reunited with Bharat at the end of the war of Lanka when he said that "the remembrance of Bharat and his miserable condition fills me with such sorrows that a moment that passes seems to be like an age for me". {Apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, line no. 2 of Doha no. 116-a as well as Doha no. 116-c.}]

सो०. भरत चरन सिरु नाइ तुरित गयउ कपि राम पहि ।

कही कुसल सब जाइ हरषि चलेउ प्रभु जान चढ़ि ॥ २ (ख) ॥

sōraṭhā.

bharata carana siru nā'i turita gaya'u kapi rāma pahim.
kahī kusala saba jā'i haraṣi calē'u prabhu jāna caḍhi. 2 (b).

Hanuman (the Kapi) bowed his head reverentially at Bharat's feet and immediately left the place to go back to Lord Ram.

Once there, he narrated all the good news to the Lord. As soon as the Lord heard that everything was fine, he immediately boarded the plane and cheerfully started towards his destination (Ayodhya)¹. (Sortha no. 2-b)

[Note—¹This verse clearly and unambiguously indicates that Lord Ram had not directly descended to land in Ayodhya earlier, but had preferred to send Hanuman instead while he took a turn to go back to meet sage Bharadwaj and Nishad, the chief of the boatman community, because the Lord wished to find out what the ground realities were like in Ayodhya.

Lord Ram wished to discern whether or not he was actually welcome in the city; and also to find out what was Bharat's attitude towards him—did he still have the same degree of love and loyalty towards the Lord, or was there any change in him during the period that elapsed between his going to Chitrakoot and now that the time of the Lord's arrival has actually arrived. Lord Ram wished to avoid any unpleasant situation; he did not want to offend Bharat in any way. So should it turn out that Bharat's warmth and love for the Lord has cooled down, and there were some evil designs waiting for him on his return, then the Lord decided in his mind that he would find some excuse to remain away and let Bharat ascend the throne of Ayodhya.

There is no doubt about it for two obvious reasons. One, it was precisely this purpose for which Hanuman was sent by him as an emissary to Bharat (refer: Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 121). And two, as soon as Hanuman brought the good news regarding Bharat—that he was very much the same Bharat as he was fourteen years ago and there is no change in his attitude at all, that his affection and devotion for the Lord had not diminished even a wee whit, and that he is eagerly awaiting Lord Ram's arrival, and that the Lord ought naught to have any apprehensions of any kind whatsoever on his account—the Lord “immediately boarded the plane to go to his destination”, without wasting any more time.]

चौ०. हरषि भरत कोसलपुर आए । समाचार सब गुरहि सुनाए ॥ १ ॥
पुनि मंदिर महँ बात जनाई । आवत नगर कुसल रघुराई ॥ २ ॥
सुनत सकल जननीं उठि धाई । कहि प्रभु कुसल भरत समुझाई ॥ ३ ॥
समाचार पुरबासिन्ह पाए । नर अरु नारि हरषि सब धाए ॥ ४ ॥

caupāī.

haraṣi bharata kōsalapura ā'ē. samācāra saba gurahi sunā'ē. 1.
puni mandira maham' bāta janā'ī. āvata nagara kusala raghurā'ī. 2.
sunata sakala jananiṁ uṭhi dhā'īm. kahi prabhu kusala bharata samujhā'īm. 3.
samācāra purabāsinha pā'ē. nara aru nāri haraṣi saba dhā'ē. 4.

The jubilant Bharat came to the capital city of the kingdom of Ayodhya, known as 'kōsalapura', and conveyed the happy tidings to his guru, sage Vasistha. (1)

Then he sent a similar message to the palace, that Lord of the Raghus, Lord Ram, is coming back to the city safely. (2)

No sooner the mothers heard this good news, than they got up and rushed to meet Bharat and enquire as to the truth of it. Bharat personally explained everything to them about the Lord's welfare¹. (3)

As soon as the citizens heard this excellent news that spread like wildfire in the city, everyone, the males as well as the females, got up immediately and sprinted out excitedly to confirm the happy tidings². (4)

[Note—¹When the eager mothers, Kaushalya, the mother of Lord Ram, and Sumitra, the mother of Laxman, heard the good news, they rushed out of their palaces to meet Bharat and ask him details. Bharat told them about his meeting with Hanuman, and what the latter had told him about Lord Ram's happy return. This good news, for which the mothers had been eagerly waiting to hear for the past so many years, filled them with utmost joy; their worried, sad and despondent countenances marked by a cloud of uncertainty and despair, suddenly changed their colour into that of delight, cheer and joy, as if the bright sunshine has made its rejuvenating appearance from behind a curtain of dark gloomy clouds.

²The good tidings of Lord Ram's safe and happy arrival sent a wave of jubilation and cheer through the streets and avenues of the great capital city of Ayodhya as if some life-saving drug has been injected into the veins of a very sick person, invigorating him and infusing a new dawn of hope in his heart that was stricken with the disease of hopelessness and helplessness just a while ago. The citizens rushed out of their homes and workplaces, leaving behind whatever they were engaged in, and in whatever condition they were in (apropos: verse no. 7 herein below). First they couldn't believe their ears and good fortune, but as the truth of the news sank in, there was a spontaneous eruption of applause, cheering and thanksgiving throughout the city. It appeared that after the grey and gloomy days of chill and snowy winter, spring has finally appeared with a splash of colours of all hues of the rainbow.]

दधि दुर्बा रोचन फल फूला । नव तुलसी दल मंगल मूला ॥ ५ ॥
 भरि भरि हेम थार भामिनी । गावत चलिं सिंधुरगामिनी ॥ ६ ॥
 जे जैसेहिं तैसेहिं उठि धावहिं । बाल बृद्ध कहँ संग न लावहिं ॥ ७ ॥
 एक एकन्ह कहँ बूझहिं भाई । तुम्ह देखे दयाल रघुराई ॥ ८ ॥

dadhi durbā rōcana phala phūlā. nava tulasī dala maṅgala mūlā. 5.
 bhari bhari hēma thāra bhāminī. gāvata calim sindhuragāminī. 6.
 jē jaisēhim taisēhim uṭhi dhāvahim. bāla bṛd'dha kham saṅga na lāvahim. 7.
 ēka ēkanha kham būjhahim bhāī. tumha dēkhē dayāla raghurāī. 8.

To mark the most auspicious news, there were widespread celebrations in the city. The honourable ladies of the city arranged auspicious articles in golden plates, things such as small pots filled with fresh curd, blades of green grass, the yellow pigment known as 'Gorochan'¹, fruits and flowers of various kinds, and freshly plucked leaves

of the sacred Tulsi (basil) plant, and came out of their homes, walking majestically with a swaying gait like adult elephants (walking down avenues during a royal ceremony), singing auspicious songs befitting the happy occasion. (5-6)

These honourable ladies got up and proceeded forth from their homes immediately upon hearing the good news, in whatever manner they happened to be at that moment, leaving aside whatever chores they were engaged in at that time, and they were so overcome with delight that they sallied out alone spontaneously, shunning their children and old people of the household². (7)

Everyone asked his neighbour whom he or she met: 'My dear, hast thou seen Lord Ram anywhere?'³ (8)

[Note—¹The 'Gorochan' is a yellow coloured viscous liquid; it is basically bile that is secreted by a cow. It is collected and used as a pigment for religious ceremonies.

²Usually it is a practice in respectable households that whenever women folk venture out into the streets and market places, they are expected to be accompanied by their children or some senior member of the family. But such formalities and niceties were kept aside for the time being; the whole city erupted as a single mass of people overwhelmed with joy and engaged in rapturous celebration. Everyone became a kin of his neighbour; every child and senior citizen became a family member of the women folk singing merrily on the street. All distinctions were obliterated; all differences of age and gender vanished; all greeted everyone else who he or she met anywhere as if they had known each other for ages.

Ayodhya was, at the time, one large family that was celebrating the welcome arrival of one of their dear members who had gone out on an adventure to an unknown land long time ago, and who has now returned safe, hale and hearty, triumphantly and victoriously, with a lot of merit and acclaim added to his already rich repertory of glory and fame.

³The news of Lord Ram's arrival had come, and that was enough to send the cheering people out into the streets. There was confusion as to where the Lord has actually arrived, or who has actually seen him. No one knew the exact answer in the tumult; so everyone asked everyone else if he or she has seen the Lord somewhere.

The glad tidings of Lord Ram's arrival punctured a hole in the pitcher of patience that the sad citizens had somehow held on to for fourteen long years, and now their patience ran out in a wild stream of impatience as they were all eager and anxious to see their beloved Lord standing right in their midst at the shortest possible time. The ecstasy and exuberance amongst the citizens of Ayodhya, ignited by the thought that finally they would meet their beloved Lord Ram once again, was so overwhelming and intense that the milling crowd created more confusion than give any clear answer to the question 'where actually Lord Ram was then?'.]

अवधपुरी प्रभु आवत जानी । भई सकल सोभा कै खानी ॥ ९ ॥

बहइ सुहावन त्रिबिध समीरा । भइ सरजू अति निर्मल नीरा ॥ १० ॥

avadhapurī prabhu āvata jānī. bha'ī sakala sōbhā kai khānī. 9.
baha'i suhāvana tribidha samīrā. bha'i sarajū ati nirmala nīrā. 10.

As soon as the news of Lord Ram's arrival reached the City of Ayodhya, deriving its name from the vast kingdom known as 'Avadha' (avadhapurī), it transformed into a most magnificent and pleasant city, an enchanting city that was like an embodiment of everything that is beautiful, pleasant and charming¹. (9)

A pleasant breeze having the three qualities of excellence² blew softly across it; and clear water flowed in the holy river Saryu that flanked the city on its north. (10)

[Note—¹When Lord Ram took birth, a similar transformation was seen in Ayodhya. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4, and 8 that precede Doha no. 194—to Doha no. 195.

²The three qualities that make a breeze pleasant are the following: it must be soft, it must be scented or have a sweet fragrance, and it must be cool.]

दो०. हरषित गुर परिजन अनुज भूसुर बृन्द समेत ।
चले भरत मन प्रेम अति सन्मुख कृपानिकेत ॥ ३ (क) ॥
dōhā.

haraṣita gura parijana anuja bhūsura bṛnda samēta.
calē bharata mana prēma ati sanmukha kṛpānikēta. 3 (a).

Every single person was jubilant and ecstatic. Accompanied by the guru (sage Vasistha), kith and kin, all the subjects of the kingdom, the younger brother (i.e. Shatrughan), and all the sages and Brahmins living there, Bharat, whose heart was brimming over with affection, set off to meet and welcome the Lord (Sri Ram) who is an abode of grace, compassion and kindness. (Doha no. 3-a)

बहुतक चढ़ीं अटारिन्ह निरखहिं गगन बिमान ।
देखि मधुर सुर हरषित करहिं सुमंगल गान ॥ ३ (ख) ॥

bahutaka caṛhīm aṭārinha nirakhahīm gagana bimāna.
dēkhi madhura sura haraṣita karahīm sumaṅgala gāna. 3 (b).

Many of the women folk went up on the terraces of their homes and watched as the plane came into view in the sky.

As soon as they saw the plane approach, they spontaneously started singing in sweet voices melodious songs that were auspicious and suitable for such occasions. (Doha no. 3-b)

राका ससि रघुपति पुर सिंधु देखि हरषान ।

बढ़्यो कोलाहल करत जनु नारि तरंग समान ॥ ३ (ग) ॥

rākā sasi raghupati pura sindhu dēkhi haraṣāna.
baṛhyō kōlāhala karata janu nāri taraṅga samāna. 3 (c).

Verily indeed, on that occasion it appeared that Lord Ram was like a full moon, and Ayodhya was like an ocean.

Just as the ocean heaves and produces high tides when the full moon shines over it, Ayodhya exulted with waves of excitement that overwhelmed its ecstatic residents who surged ahead with bubbling enthusiasm as soon as Lord Ram was sighted overhead in the sky. In this surging crowd of jubilant citizens, the women folk were like the waves of the ocean that move forward as soon as it sights the moon above. (Doha no. 3-c)

[Note—In this imagery, Lord Ram is compared to the moon as presently he is seen aboard the plane that is airborne, just like the moon that is seen at its station in the sky. On the ground below, the huge crowd of cheering citizens surging forward to meet the Lord is compared to the ocean that has high tides when a full moon is overhead, and the waves move inland in a particular direction just as the excited citizens are moving in the direction where the plane seems to be headed to make a landing.

Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-6 that precede Doha no. 1.]

चौ०. इहाँ भानुकुल कमल दिवाकर । कपिन्ह देखावत नगर मनोहर ॥ १ ॥

सुनु कपीस अंगद लंकेसा । पावन पुरी रुचिर यह देसा ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

ihām^ṁ bhānukula kamala divākara. kapinha dēkhāvata nagara manōhara. 1.
sunu kapīsa aṅgada laṅkēsā. pāvana purī rucira yaha dēsā. 2.

{Meanwhile, when Hanuman conveyed the good news to Lord Ram that everything was fine with Bharat, and the Lord should have no hesitation in proceeding to Ayodhya forthwith as he would be affectionately and warmly received, the Lord immediately boarded the Pushpak plane and headed to his destination. As the plane neared Ayodhya, the Lord cheerfully pointed out the beauty of the sprawling city to his companions who were accompanying him on board the plane.}

Here, Lord Ram, who was like a Sun that made the lotus flower representing the Solar Race bloom¹, showed his Kapi friends the charming city of Ayodhya that spread on the ground below. (1)

Lord Ram said: ‘Listen Sugriv (kapīsa), Angad and Vibhishan (laṅkēsā)! This city itself is holy, and it grants holiness to them who view it. The countryside surrounding it, as well as the country of which it is the capital city (i.e. the kingdom of ‘Ayodhya’), are as charming as the city itself². (2)

[Note—¹In this metaphor, Lord Ram is likened to the ‘sun’, and the solar race that ruled over the kingdom of Ayodhya and in which the Lord was born, to the ‘lotus flower’. The lotus flower is known to open its petals and bloom when the sun rises in the sky. So as soon as Lord Ram appeared in a plane over the city of Ayodhya just as the sun rises in the sky, the whole family of the Lord, as well as the city where they lived, felt happy and exuberant as if a lotus has opened its petals at the sight of the overhead sun.

²The Lord means that the capital city of Ayodhya, along with the surrounding countryside and the kingdom of which the city is the capital, and from which it derives its name ‘Ayodhya’ or ‘Avadh’ or ‘Kaushal Puri’, are all equally charming and wonderful to behold. The kingdom of Ayodhya was also known as Avadh or Kaushal, and hence its capital city had various names, such as ‘Ayodhya’, ‘Avadh’ or ‘Kaushal Puri’.]

जद्यपि सब बैकुंठ बखाना । बेद पुरान बिदित जगु जाना ॥ ३ ॥
अवधपुरी सम प्रिय नहिं सोऊ । यह प्रसंग जानइ कोउ कोऊ ॥ ४ ॥

jadyapi saba baikunṭha bakhānā. bēda purāna bidita jagu jānā. 3.
avadhapurī sama priya nahim sō'ū. yaha prasaṅga jāna'i kō'u kō'ū. 4.

Although everyone praises the glories of Vaikuntha (which is the heavenly abode of Lord Vishnu)¹, and it is famed in the Vedas, the Purans as well as the rest of the world [3], yet it is not dear to me as is the capital city of Ayodhya, known as ‘Avadhpuri’². Very few are fortunate to realize this³. [4] (3-4)

[Note—¹Lord Ram is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being who has his abode in Vaikuntha, that part of heaven where the Lord resides. Heaven has many divisions or sections or areas where different gods live. The part where Indra, the king of gods live, is called ‘Indra-loka’. Similarly, there is ‘Brahma-loka’ where Brahma, the creator, has his abode; Mt. ‘Kailash’ or ‘Shiva-loka’ is where Lord Shiva lives, ‘Gandharva-loka’ where the Gandharvas live, and so on. The highest among these various heavenly abodes is ‘Vaikuntha’ where Lord Vishnu lives.

The word ‘Vaikuntha’ is derived from the words ‘Kuntha’ and ‘Vai’. Kuntha means that which decays; and Vai means that which does not. Hence, the word Vaikuntha means ‘that which does not decay’; or that which is ‘eternal’. Thus, Vaikuntha is the eternal abode of the Supreme Being, or the abode of that Lord who is eternal.

²Ayodhya is dearer to Lord Ram than Vaikuntha because the Lord took birth for the welfare of his devotees in the former city, and since devotees are themselves very dear to the Lord, hence that city which hosted the Lord so that he could deliver countless devotees and provide them endless joy in this world would naturally be dearer to him than a place where the creature goes after his death. Whereas the Lord who lives in Vaikuntha is an invisible Being, and that abode known as Vaikuntha itself is too abstract to be understood by the common man, it is of little or no practical value for an ordinary living being who is toiling throughout his life in this mundane world, hoping to find some means of attaining peace of mind and bliss of the spirit.

On the other hand there is Lord Ram who lived in Ayodhya, like an ordinary human being, himself undergoing all the problems associated with life in this mundane world, and yet acting as a beacon of hope and solace for the tormented soul of the creature, promising happiness and salvation to him, then surely the Lord and his abode known as Ayodhya become more practically relevant to the living being. In this context, refer to: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precede Doha no. 75; (ii) Chaupai line no. 12 that precede Doha no. 114.

This is the primary reason why the Lord says that ‘Ayodhya is dearer to me than Vaikuntha’.

Incidentally, the ‘Tripaadvibhut Mahanarayan Upanishad’ describes the existence of seven Vaikunthas in its Canto nos. 6-7. These are the following: Paad-vibhuti Vaikuntha, Vishwaksen Vaikuntha, Brahma-Vidya Vaikuntha, Sri Tulsi Vaikuntha, Bodha-nanda Vaikuntha, Sudarshan Vaikuntha, and Advaita Vaikuntha which is also known as Tripaadvibhut Vaikuntha.

³The glories of Ayodhya has been lauded elsewhere too in Ram Charit Manas. For instance, (i) Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 16; Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 195; (ii) Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 74; (iii) Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 120; (iv) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-7 that precede Doha no. 97; Chaupai line nos. 9-10 that precede Doha no. 109.]

जन्मभूमि मम पुरी सुहावनि । उत्तर दिसि बह सरजू पावनि ॥ ५ ॥

जा मज्जन ते बिनहिं प्रयासा । मम समीप नर पावहिं बासा ॥ ६ ॥

janmabhūmi mama purī suhāvani. utara disi baha sarajā pāvani. 5.
jā majjana tē binahim prayāsā. mama samīpa nara pāvahim bāsā. 6.

It (Ayodhya) is my birthplace, and it is a very charming and magnificent city. On its north flows the holy river Saryu [5], and taking a bath in it helps to purify the soul of my devotees and entitles them to have an abode near me¹ [6]. (5-6)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 16; (ii) Doha no. 34 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that follow it.

The idea here is that just like the holy river Ganges is said to provide purification to a person when he or she takes a bath in it, the river Saryu too provides a similar benefit to those who bathe in its holy waters.

Since the impurities clinging to the creature’s inner-self are symbolically washed off by such bathing, he becomes eligible for attaining deliverance from this world. This translates into his attaining an abode near the Lord God in order to be able to serve him.

When we visit any holy place, such as a temple, it is expected from us that we have first taken a bath. Now, here the same principle applies when one bathes in the river Saryu to first clean himself before visiting the shrines in the pilgrim city of Ayodhya. Taking a physical bath to clean the body before visiting holy shrines is from the perspective of the gross world, but when it is extended to be applied to a higher level of existence, to a more subtle and sublime level, the same principle can be applied to the soul of a creature, meaning that one can attain deliverance,

liberation, salvation and emancipation only if one has thoroughly cleaned his inner self.

It ought to be clearly understood here that this bath in the river Saryu, or for that matter even in river Ganges, is just a symbolic gesture to imply that the spiritual aspirant has cleaned his inner-self and is ready to enter the holy portal where the Lord God lives, to accept a communion with the Lord and embrace his goodness in a most sincere way; for mere physical cleaning of the body by just dipping in the river would serve no purpose worthwhile.]

अति प्रिय मोहि इहाँ के बासी । मम धामदा पुरी सुख रासी ॥ ७ ॥
हरषे सब कपि सुनि प्रभु बानी । धन्य अवध जो राम बखानी ॥ ८ ॥

ati priya mōhi ihām' kē bāsī. mama dhāmadā purī sukha rāsī. 7.
haraṣē saba kapi suni prabhu bānī. dhan'ya avadha jō rāma bakhānī. 8.

Those who live here are very dear to me. This city is like a storehouse of everything that is pleasant and a giver of comfort. It also blesses those who live here with an opportunity to attain my (heavenly) abode¹.’ (7)

Upon hearing such words of praise for Ayodhya as spoken by Lord Ram, all the Kapis felt very glad, and exclaimed: ‘Glory to Ayodhya which Lord Ram refers to’. (8)

[Note—¹One must understand the text in the correct perspective and context, for mere literal reading is often misleading. The ‘Ayodhya’ that Lord Ram refers to is the city in which Lord Vishnu had taken birth in Treta Yuga. The people whom the Lord so lavishly praises were followers of the principles of Dharma (righteousness, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, ethics and morality), people who were saintly, pious and inherently holy, were devout followers of Lord God and practitioners of good virtues. The auspicious qualities of the residents of Ayodhya of Lord Ram’s time are clearly outlined in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 20—to Doha no. 22.

To wit, when Lord Ram says “the residents of Ayodhya are very dear to me”, obviously he refers to such virtuous and people of excellent character as described in the verses cited herein above, but surely the Lord could never mean the people of the Ayodhya as found in the time of Kali-Yuga, people who are no different from those who do not live here, for to tell the truth and to be honest, one would rarely descry in people of Ayodhya of today’s time any such excellent virtues as were present in the residents of Ayodhya of the Lord’s time whom he praises so much. And even if one would not deny that there are surely some virtuous ones still living here, but they are definitely miniscule in number and hard to come by.]

दो०. आवत देखि लोग सब कृपासिंधु भगवान ।
नगर निकट प्रभु प्रेरेउ उत्तरेउ भूमि बिमान ॥ ४ (क) ॥
उतरि कहेउ प्रभु पुष्पकहि तुम्ह कुबेर पहि जाहु ।
प्रेरित राम चलेउ सो हरषु बिरहु अति ताहु ॥ ४ (ख) ॥

dōhā.

āvata dēkhi lōga saba kṛpāsindhu bhagavāna.
nagara nikāṭa prabhu prērē'u utarē'u bhūmi bimāna. 4 (a).
utari kahē'u prabhu puṣpakahi tumha kubēra pahim jāhu.
prērīta rāma calē'u sō haraṣu birahu ati tāhu. 4 (b).

When Lord Ram, who was an ocean of mercy, compassion, kindness and grace (kṛpāsindhu bhagavāna), observed that the citizens were coming out in multitudes to welcome him¹, he ordered the Pushpak plane to land on the outskirts of the city of Ayodhya. (Doha no. 4-a)

After disembarking from the plane along with all his companions, the Lord asked 'Pushpak'² to go back to Kuber (the treasurer of the gods to whom this plane belonged)³.

Obeying the Lord's command, Pushpak departed from there; it was on the one hand very joyful for being able to return to his Master in the heavens, but on the other hand it was overwhelmed with grief and sadness too for being separated from the Lord⁴. (Doha no. 4-b)

[Note—¹As soon as the news had reached the city from the place where Hanuman met Bharat, which was on the outskirts, some distance away where Bharat had been living in self-imposed exile during the period of Lord Ram's absence*, at a place that came to be known as 'Nandigram', the city erupted in a joyous tumult. Every single person ran in the direction of Bharat's hermitage, excited and exhilarated as ever. From his plane high up in the sky, Lord Ram observed a huge tide of jubilant citizens pouring out of the city and heading speedily in the direction of Bharat's habitat, dancing, singing, waving frantically at the plane, and cheering all the way along, running as fast as their legs would carry them, so eager were the enthusiastic people that everyone wished to be the first one to reach the site of the Lord's landing and likewise be the first one to greet their beloved Lord and welcome him back home, that the road seemed to be chock-a-block with waves after waves of joyful citizens as if a gigantic Tsunami had broken all the dykes of gloom and despair and despondency to run headlong inland at full throttle, roaring and thundering all the way, excited with the energy of joy, and wondering at its good fortune.

This confirmed to the Lord what Hanuman had informed him about the sort of reception he can expect upon arrival—that he was welcome in Ayodhya with the greatest intensity of warmth and affection one can imagine, and this was beyond doubt now.

²One can conjecture at two possibilities here: One is that this word 'Pushpak' applies to the plane as well as its driver or pilot, and both were known by the same name of Pushpak. The other possibility is that the Pushpak plane was a wonder plane running on some sort of mechanism that worked on either the 'voice command' or the 'thought command', being a pilot-less air vehicle running on some sort of highly evolved application of science. It is easy for us to visualize this actually happening because in our modern world of advanced science we have machines working on Artificial Intelligence that respond exactly the same way, though till now such responses are limited to the 'voice command', but a day is not far off when the 'thought command' would also drive machines.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 179. We read here that Ravana had attacked heaven and snatched this remarkable plane from Kuber, the gods' treasurer.

⁴Pushpak felt 'joyful' because at last 'it'—or should we use the pronoun 'he', because we have just read herein above that the word could also refer to the plane's pilot—had found freedom to go back to heaven and join the service of its Master, Kuber.

But at the same time it was very 'sad' because it would miss the opportunity to witness and participate in Lord Ram's warm welcome in the city as well as the ceremony marking his anointment on the throne of Ayodhya as the kingdom's great King.

But Pushpak had no choice as he had to comply with the Lord's orders. So 'he' reluctantly went to heaven to present himself before Kuber.

A similar thing is narrated in Adhyatma Ramayan, Lanka Kand, Canto 14, verse nos. 98-99.]

चौ०. आए भरत संग सब लोग । कृस तन श्रीरघुबीर बियोगा ॥ १ ॥
 बामदेव बसिष्ठ मुनिनायक । देखे प्रभु महि धरि धनु सायक ॥ २ ॥
 धाइ धरे गुर चरन सरोरुह । अनुज सहित अति पुलक तनोरुह ॥ ३ ॥

caupāī.

ā'e bharata saṅga saba lōgā. kṛsa tana śrīraghubīra biyōgā. 1.
 bāmadēva basiṣṭa munināyaka. dēkhē prabhu mahi dhari dhanu sāyaka. 2.
 dhā'i dharē gura carana sarōruha. anuja sahita ati pulaka tanōruha. 3.

Bharat, accompanied by all the people, came to the place where the plane had landed; all of them had suffered so much in grief and sorrow over the years for being separated from their beloved Lord Ram that all looked emaciated and weak (as if stricken by some serious disease of the body and the mind)¹. (1)

When Lord Ram and his younger brother Laxman descried the illustrious sages Vaamdeo and guru Vasistha amongst the many great sages who had come to receive them, the two brothers (Lord Ram and Laxman) put their bows and quivers containing arrows on the ground and dashed forward to meet these sages. (2)

Lord Ram (and Laxman) ran to guru Vasistha and fell down at his feet, clasping them with both their hands (in a gesture of great respect for the family priest and preceptor). As the two brothers paid their respects to their guru, their bodies were filled with great thrill (as they felt very happy and thankful to their guru for his blessings and good wishes that had supported them in their times of adversity, and has finally made it possible for them to return safely back home). (3)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 86 along with Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede it—where we read that the citizens spent the time of Lord Ram's absence in observing austerities and doing penances of various kinds to atone for their sins that had brought such horrible misfortunes upon them that they had to be

separated from their beloved Lord Ram, and praying that they could once again be united with him.

In Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 158—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 159 we further read that when Bharat returned to Ayodhya upon being urgently summoned by the kingdom's priest, guru Vasistha, he discovered a gloomy city that appeared to be stricken by some grave misfortune, with all its citizens sullen and remorseful, their countenances dark and sunken, and their general demeanours indicating that all were suffering from some serious disease of the mind and the body.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 199 where a similar idea is expressed.

As far as Bharat is concerned, his pitiable condition has been summarized in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 325.]

भेंटि कुसल बूझी मुनिराया । हमरें कुसल तुम्हारिहिं दाया ॥ ४ ॥

सकल द्विजन्ह मिलि नायउ माथा । धर्म धुरंधर रघुकुलनाथा ॥ ५ ॥

bhēṇṭi kusala būjhī munirāyā. hamarēm kusala tumhārihiṁ dāyā. 4.

sakala dvijanha mili nāya'u māthā. dharma dhurandhara raghukulanāthā. 5.

The senior sage (Vasistha) asked them about their welfare, and the two brothers replied cheerfully, 'We are well and happy by your grace and blessings'. (4)

The Lord of the Raghus (Lord Ram), who is an expert in observing the principles of Dharma (proper conduct and righteous behaviour) thereafter met all the Brahmins who were present there, and bowed his head before each of them to pay his respects to them all¹. (5)

[Note—¹It would be highly wrong for the Lord to just bow his head before guru Vasistha and sage Vaamdeo, and to skip other Brahmins who were present there. So therefore, Lord Ram took care to pay his obeisance to every senior person of the Brahmin community who present on the occasion.

Lord Ram had always endorsed the view that Brahmins ought to be shown respect as is clear when he himself says so in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 45.]

गहे भरत पुनि प्रभु पद पंकज । नमत जिन्हहि सुर मुनि संकर अज ॥ ६ ॥

परे भूमि नहिं उठत उठाए । बर करि कृपासिंधु उर लाए ॥ ७ ॥

स्यामल गात रोम भए ठाढ़े । नव राजीव नयन जल बाढ़े ॥ ८ ॥

gahē bharata puni prabhu pada paṅkaja. namata jinhahi sura muni saṅkara aja. 6.

parē bhūmi nahim uṭhata uṭhā'ē. bara kari kṛpāsindhu ura lā'ē. 7.

syāmala gāta rōma bha'ē ṭhārḥē. nava rājīva nayana jala bārḥē. 8.

Thence, Bharat rushed to clasp the lotus-like feet of Lord Ram, the holy feet before which even the great gods, the illustrious sages, hermits and ascetics, as well as Lord Shiva and the creator Brahma ('aja') too bow their heads in reverence. (6)

Bharat fell down on the ground before the Lord, and would not get up even after the Lord made several attempts to lift him.

Finally, Lord Ram, the Lord who is an ocean of compassion and kindness (krpāsindhu), lifted Bharat forcefully up from the ground where he lay prostrate, and tenderly clasped the latter to his own bosom with all the affection the Lord could muster. (7)

The dark complexioned bodies of both the brothers (Lord Ram and Bharat)¹ were so much exhilarated that they had goose bumps all over, even as streams of tears rolled down their eyes². (8)

[Note—¹Lord Ram and Bharat had dark complexions, whereas Laxman and Shatrughan had fair ones. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 198; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 3-7 that precede Doha no. 311; and (iii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 327.

²When Lord Ram and Bharat met at Chitrakoot, a similar warmth had effused from them both as they rushed towards each other, as Bharat fell down prostrate before Lord Ram, and as the Lord lifted him and clasped him to his bosom. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 240—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 241.

A wonderfully similar scene of two dear brothers meeting each other after a long-long time is described in Miguel de Carvantes' classic tale of 'Don Quixote', in its Chapter XV of Book IV. It describes the meeting of the Judge named Juan Perez de Viedma and his elder brother Captain Ruy Perez de Viedma. When they first met each other after a long period of separation, and witnessed by their companions, "they rushed into each other's arms, with such affectionate feelings, with such abundance of tears rolling down their eyes that all the spectators sympathized in their loving passions." "The brothers spoke so feelingly, and their mutual affection was so moving, the surprise so wonderful, and their joy so transporting, that it must be left purely to one's imagination to conceive." "Now they tell one another the strange turns and mazes of their fortunes, then renew their caresses to the height of brotherly love and tenderness, --- so touched the whole company of gentlemen and ladies present there was that they all wept for excess of joy."

In the verses that follow herein below, we shall discover how the above portrait fits in well with Lord Ram-Bharat meeting.]

छं०. राजीव लोचन स्रवत जल तन ललित पुलकावलि बनी । १ ।
 अति प्रेम हृदयँ लगाइ अनुजहि मिले प्रभु त्रिभुवन धनी ॥ २ ॥
 प्रभु मिलत अनुजहि सोह मो पहिं जाति नहिं उपमा कही । ३ ।
 जनु प्रेम अरु सिंगार तनु धरि मिले बर सुषमा लही ॥ ४ ॥

chanda.

rājīva lōcana sravata jala tana lalita pulakāvali banī. 1.
 ati prēma hṛdayam' lagā'i anujahi milē prabhu tribhu'ana dhanī. 2.
 prabhu milata anujahi sōha mō pahim jāti nahim upamā kahī. 3.
 janu prēma aru siṅgāra tanu dhari milē bara suṣamā lahī. 4.

Tears of love and affection flow out in abundance from their lotus like eyes; their charming bodies were thrilled and covered with goose bumps caused with pleasant excitement and emotion of extreme joy. (Chanda line no. 1)

Lord Ram, the Lord of the three divisions of the world¹ (prabhu tribhu'ana dhanī), met and embraced his younger brother Bharat very affectionately, clasping him to his bosom very lovingly and with brotherly passion. (Chanda line no. 2)

The scene of Lord Ram meeting his younger brother Bharat was emotionally so wonderful and heart-touching to behold that I (the poet Tulsidas) cannot find an apt comparison to it, nor anything parallel with it so as to sufficiently illustrate the magnitude of their mutual affection for each other or the beauty of the scene. (Chanda line no. 3)

Nevertheless, let me venture to say that it was like two personified forms of the virtues of brotherly love and its inherent beauty of emotions meeting each other very affectionately². (Chanda line no. 4)

[Note—¹The three divisions of the world are heaven, earth and the nether world.

²The poet Tulsidas says that though he cannot give a complete picture of the majesty and beauty of the scene of Lord Ram meeting Bharat, with its high emotional quotient of brotherly love, affection and trust, yet I can make a conjecture by way of making a rough comparison by citing the above two forms just to convey the idea of how wonderful the scene of the two brothers meeting might have been, leaving the rest to the imagination of the reader as everyone must have experienced, in the course of their own lives, such emotional moments of warmth of love, affection and passion sprouting forth from their hearts for those whom they love most dearly.]

बूझत कृपानिधि कुसल भरतहि बचन बेगि न आवई । ५ ।
 सुनु सिवा सो सुख बचन मन ते भिन्न जान जो पावई ॥ ६ ॥
 अब कुसल कौसलनाथ आरत जानि जन दरसन दियो । ७ ।
 बूझत बिरह बारीस कृपानिधान मोहि कर गहि लियो ॥ ८ ॥

būjhata kṛpānidhi kusala bharatahi bacana bēgi na āva'ī. 5.
 sunu sivā sō sukha bacana mana tē bhinna jāna jō pāva'ī. 6.
 aba kusala kausalanātha ārata jāni jana darasana diyō. 7.
 būrata biraha bārīsa kṛpānidhāna mōhi kara gahi liyō. 8.

Lord Ram, who was an embodiment of the virtues of kindness, mercy and compassion (kṛpānidhi), most affectionately asked Bharat about his welfare, but the latter was so

overwhelmed with emotions that he could not utter a word in answer¹. (Chanda line no. 5)

[As an interjection, Lord Shiva, who was narrating this divine Story to his consort Uma, told her—]

“Listen Uma”, said Lord Shiva, “The sense of contentment, the feeling of extreme joy and profound bliss that swelled inside Bharat were of such high intensity, and had dimension so great, that it is beyond the scope of the mind and the faculty of speech to describe them. Verily indeed, only those who have had such feelings themselves in their lives, who have had experienced it personally some time in the course of their lives, can only understand how profound and stupendous it might have been; they alone can have an idea of its deep depth and soaring height.” (Chanda line no. 6)

Finally Bharat recovered his composure enough so as to be able to answer Lord Ram in most graceful terms. He said: ‘Oh gracious Lord of Kaushal! Everything is fine and fortunate now that you have been kind enough to realize that I am very humble and meek, thereby granting me the privilege of seeing you once again as you decided that I was eligible for such an honour. (Chanda line no. 7)

I was almost drowned in the ocean of grief caused by separation from you, but just at the right moment thine merciful Lordship hast caught me by thy arms and saved me from doom.’ (Chanda line no. 8)

[Note—¹To wit, Bharat’s throat was virtually choked as he was so overcome with emotions and had become so sentimental at that time that he could not speak anything in reply. Even if he had said something in reply, it was so muffled and subdued by the heavy weight of his emotions strangling his voice that it was not more than a whisper or a muttering or a sigh that was not heard by anyone. Remember: Bharat was weeping, and his sobs got so great a hold on him that even if he had tried to answer Lord Ram, he failed.

Similar ideas are expressed elsewhere in Ram Charit Manas. For instance, Vibhishan says this in Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 46; and Nishad in Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 88.]

दो०. पुनि प्रभु हरषि सत्रुहन भेंटे हृदयँ लगाइ ।
लछिमन भरत मिले तब परम प्रेम दोउ भाइ ॥ ५ ॥
dōhā.

puni prabhu haraṣi satruhana bhēṇṭē hr̥dayam̐ lagā'i.
lachimana bharata milē taba parama prēma dō'u bhā'i. 5.

Then the Lord (Sri Ram) affectionately met Shatrughan (the youngest of the four brothers), and emotionally clasped him to his bosom¹.

Meanwhile, Bharat and Laxman cheerfully met each other, with both the brothers overwhelmed with mutual brotherly love and affection².* (Doha no. 5)

[Note—¹A very interesting observation can be made here. In neither of the two cases, i.e. Lord Ram meeting Shatrughan, and Bharat meeting Laxman, is there any mention of the younger brother falling at the feet of his elder sibling to pay his respects, as is the norm and tradition, and naturally expected from them. So what may have happened at that time can be imagined as follows:-

When Bharat fell down at the feet of Lord Ram (Chaupai nos. 6-7 that precede this Doha), it is very possible, and even quite natural, that Shatrughan would have accompanied his elder brother Bharat when the latter lay prostrate before Lord Ram. Lord Ram picked up Bharat and embraced him first because he was elder to Shatrughan, and then the Lord pulled Shatrughan close and clasped the latter to his bosom.

²In the case of Bharat and Laxman meeting each other, it can be visualized that as soon as Bharat was freed from Lord Ram's embrace, as the Lord turned towards Shatrughan to clasp him to his bosom, he dashed to Laxman standing close by. Laxman too ran towards Bharat with outstretched arms, and the two brothers fell into each other's arms very emotionally, each tightly embracing and caressing the other repeatedly.

*So here we have a wonderful scene of two pairs of loving brothers, Lord Ram and Shatrughan, and Laxman and Bharat, embracing and caressing each other very movingly, with their bodies thrilled and tears rolling down from their moist eyes.

The pairing is remarkable: Shatrughan and Laxman had similar complexions as both of them were fair, while Lord Ram and Bharat were dark in complexion.

Besides this, there is another significant point to be made here: Lord Ram expressed his gratitude to Shatrughan for taking care of the affairs of the kingdom during the 14 years of his absence, because Bharat had lived like a recluse in Nandigram and the routine administration of the kingdom was handled by Shatrughan. On the other hand, Bharat thanked Laxman profusely for serving Lord Ram in the forest and fighting alongside him in the war of Lanka on behalf of both Bharat and Shatrughan. That is why "the brothers repeatedly embraced and caressed each other". They asked each other one question, was answered, and then asked another question, and with each reply and subsequent query there was renewed hugging and tapping of the shoulders.

In the verse that follows herein below, we shall read that after meeting Bharat, Laxman met Shatrughan too. In both the cases of Lord Ram and Laxman meeting their brothers Bharat and Shatrughan one after another, we observe that a particular order is followed. Both Lord Ram and Laxman first meet Bharat, and after that they meet Shatrughan. The reason is that Bharat was elder to Shatrughan, and so it was in order that the elder brother is embraced first, followed by the younger one.]

चौ०. भरतानुज लछिमन पुनि भेंटे । दुसह बिरह संभव दुख मेटे ॥ १ ॥

सीता चरन भरत सिरु नावा । अनुज समेत परम सुख पावा ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

bharatānuja lachimana puni bhēṇṭē. dusaha biraha sambhava dukha mēṭē. 1.
sītā carana bharata siru nāvā. anuja samēta parama sukha pāvā. 2.

Laxman subsequently met Bharat's younger brother Shatrughan.

With this emotional meeting of all the four brothers, all possible causes of any sort of misgivings, sorrows, grief and remorse, that may have existed and secretly lurked somewhere, were dispelled for good¹. (1)

Then Bharat, along with his younger brother Shatrughan, bowed his head at the feet of Sita to pay respects to her, and this gesture gave both the brothers immense joy (as they felt comforted in their hearts)².* (2)

[Note—¹With the affectionate way the four brothers met and repeatedly embraced and caressed each other, with thrilled bodies and wet eyes, all traces of misunderstanding and remorse that may have lurked somewhere in their minds were completely eliminated. The effusing warmth and bonhomie of the way they met also sent out a strong and unequivocal signal to all the citizens observing them that all was well and fine with them once again, that their mutual love and trust had not changed a wee whit over the testing time of 14 long years, and that all the bitterness of the past, if they were any, have been buried and forgotten forever.

The meeting of the four brothers, Lord Ram, Bharat, Laxman and Shatrughan, was marked by such tender feelings of brotherly love, and of mutual affection and respect for each other, that all those who observed them, i.e. the citizens of Ayodhya, the guests who had arrived on the plane with the Lord, as well as Lord Shiva who was narrating this divine Story of Lord Ram to his consort goddess Uma, were mesmerized by it, and it left in an ecstatic state of the mind and heart.

²Bharat and Shatrughan have simultaneously bowed their heads before Sita to seek her blessings. This helped them to feel comforted in their hearts because they had been suffering from excess of remorse and guilty ever since she had gone to the forest with Lord Ram. When they bowed their heads before Sita, she smiled and blessed them, thereby assuaging their sorrowful feelings and redeeming their conscience.

*When Bharat had gone to Chitrakoot earlier to meet Lord Ram and try to bring him back home, the meeting between the four brothers, as well as Bharat and Shatrughan paying their respect to Sita, followed the same pattern as has been described here. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 240—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 242.}]

प्रभु बिलोकि हरषे पुरबासी । जनित बियोग बिपति सब नासी ॥ ३ ॥

प्रेमातुर सब लोग निहारी । कौतुक कीन्ह कृपाल खरारी ॥ ४ ॥

अमित रूप प्रगटे तेहि काला । जथाजोग मिले सबहि कृपाला ॥ ५ ॥

prabhu bilōki haraṣē purabāsi. janita biyōga bipati saba nāsi. 3.
prēmātura saba lōga nihārī. kautuka kīnha kṛpāla kharārī. 4.
amita rūpa pragaṭē tēhi kālā. jathājōga milē sabahi kṛpālā. 5.

The citizens of Ayodhya felt exuberant and exceedingly exhilarated when they saw (their beloved) Lord Ram; all their woes, miseries, grief and misfortunes arising out of separation from the Lord were now eliminated for good¹. (3)

When the compassionate Lord Ram observed that the people were so happy to see him back home, and also that they were very impatient to meet him personally and exchange greetings (if that was at all possible), the merciful, obliging and gracious Lord (*krpāla*), who had slayed the demon Khar (*kharārī*), performed a miracle of sorts. (4)

[What did he do?] The Lord instantly produced countless images in his own likeness, and met each person individually according to his wishes, and in an appropriate manner². (5)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 81—to Doha no. 86.

²People had different emotions with respect to Lord Ram. Some treated him as their Lord; some as their friend; some others as their brother; still someone else would like to call him a family member; some elderly loved him like a son, and so on. Hence, Lord Ram met everyone in accordance to his wishes: becoming a Lord for one, a brother for another, a friend for the third, a family member for someone, and a son for another, and so on.

A similar event had occurred in Janakpur where the citizens of this city had assembled to witness the marriage ceremony of Lord Ram and Sita. Each person viewed Lord Ram in accordance to his own preferences—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 241—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 242.

Presently, Lord Ram embraced someone, he patted the shoulder of someone else; some he bowed at, some he smiled at; with some he shook hands warmly, with others he exchanged pleasant memories of their childhood days; with some he talked and with some he exchanged sweet glances; some the Lord clasped to his bosom while someone else clasped the Lord to his own; and so on and on went this mutual show of love and affection between the loving citizens on the one hand, and their equally loving Lord Ram on the other hand.

Every single individual thought that Lord Ram has met him personally, and he was so focused on this direct interaction with his beloved Lord that he did not bother about others, nor was he even aware that he was not the only one whom Lord Ram has met, but that the Lord was simultaneously meeting all the assembled citizens at once.]

कृपादृष्टि रघुबीर बिलोकी । किए सकल नर नारि बिसोकी ॥ ६ ॥
छन महि सबहि मिले भगवाना । उमा मरम यह काहुँ न जाना ॥ ७ ॥
एहि बिधि सबहि सुखी करि रामा । आगें चले सील गुन धामा ॥ ८ ॥
कौसल्यादि मातु सब धाई । निरखि बच्छ जनु धेनु लवाई ॥ ९ ॥

krpādr̥ṣṭi raghubīra bilōkī. ki'ē sakala nara nāri bisōkī. 6.
chana mahim sabahi milē bhagavānā. umā marama yaha kāhum'na jānā. 7.
ēhi bidhi sabahi sukhī kari rāmā. āgēm calē sīla guna dhāmā. 8.
kausalyādi mātū saba dhā'ī. nirakhi baccha janū dhēnu lavā'ī. 9.

Lord Raghubir (Lord Ram) glanced at all the citizens, both the males and the females, with his gracious look full of compassion and mercy, and this sent cheers amongst the citizenry; everyone felt that all his or her sorrows and grief have vanished instantly. (6)

In this way, the Lord (*bhagavānā*) met each person in a very short time.

Lord Shiva told his consort Uma (who was listening to this divine Story of Lord Ram): “Uma, it was a mystical occurrence, a magical feat of such rarity that no one could know what actually had happened¹. (7)

In this way, after having pleased everyone present on the occasion, Lord Ram, who is an abode of the virtues of courteousness and all other excellent qualities, proceeded ahead (towards the city). (8)

Kaushalya and all other mothers (Sumitra and Kaikeyi²), rushed forward to meet the Lord even as a cow rushes to meet her calf as soon as she sees it coming from a distance³. (9)

[Note—¹Everyone thought that Lord Ram was meeting him or her personally, exchanging greetings and saying pleasantries; but the fact was that within a few moments the Lord had obliged a large crowd by assuming as many forms as there were people, and meeting each person individually. It was a miraculous event, and at that point of time no one could fathom its significance. Everyone was contented that the Lord was so gracious that he went out of his way to personally meet him or her, without realizing that he did it with each person in the crowd that had come to welcome him home.

From a metaphysical perspective, this event was in accordance with the philosophy of the universality of the Lord, of the fact that the ‘Atma’, the cosmic Consciousness that the Lord represents, is omnipresent and all-pervading. The Lord is present everywhere and at all times, and he needs only purity of devotion and love to manifest himself before his devotee. To wit, one need not go anywhere to search for the Supreme Being; he is present here and now if a spiritual seeker has the requisite level of purity of devotion and love for the Lord in his heart, and if he is sincere in his quest for communion with the Lord.

Lord Shiva has himself endorsed this view in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede Doha no. 185—when he advises the gods and the creator Brahma as well as mother earth that they need not go in search for the Supreme Being anywhere, for the Lord would reveal himself right where they are standing at present if only they had the needed level of devotion and affection for him, coupled with an earnest desire to meet him.

²Yes, both Sumitra and Kaikayi, the mothers of Laxman and Bharat respectively, too had joined Kaushalya to go out to meet Lord Ram as will be clear shortly in Doha no. 6 herein below.

³Here, Lord Ram is the ‘calf’, and the mothers are like the ‘cow’. When the cow sees her young calf at the end of the day, she bolts towards her young one. Similarly, when Kaushalya and Sumitra, the mothers of Lord Ram and Laxman respectively, had heard that their beloved sons have come back safely, they had rushed out of their palaces to reach the gates and wait there eagerly for their arrival. Soon the procession

of jubilant citizens that accompanied Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman reached the city, and no sooner did the Lord come within sight of the mothers, than the latter abandoned all inhibitions and dashed out on the streets to meet their sons.]

छं०. जनु धेनु बालक बच्छ तजि गृहँ चरन बन परबस गई । १ ।
 दिन अंत पुर रुख स्रवत थन हुंकार करि धावत भई ॥ २ ॥
 अति प्रेम प्रभु सब मातु भेटीं बचन मृदु बहुबिधि कहे । ३ ।
 गइ बिषम बिपति बियोग भव तिन्ह हरष सुख अगनित लहे ॥ ४ ॥

chanda.

janu dhēnu bālaka baccha taji gr̥ham̐ carana bana parabasa ga'īm. 1.
 dina anta pura rukha sravata thana huṅkāra kari dhāvata bha'īm. 2.
 ati prēma prabhu saba mātū bhēṭīm bacana mṛdu bahubidhi kahē. 3.
 ga'i biṣama bipati biyōga bhava tinha haraṣa sukha aganita lahē. 4.

The way the mothers rushed forward to meet Lord Ram and Laxman was reminiscent of the way a cow, that had recently delivered her calf, would eagerly rush towards the village or the cowshed where she had left her young one earlier in the day when she was forced to go to the forest or a meadow to graze, or for some other reason, mooing lovingly and sprinting forward longingly, with milk oozing from her udders, so that she can be with her calf as quickly as possible. (Chanda line nos. 1-2)

Lord Ram met all the mothers very lovingly and with great affection, speaking with them in a sweet voice and talking with them reassuringly in various ways¹. (Chanda line no. 3)

All kinds of misery, torment, grief and pain associated with their long separation from the Lord were dispelled for good now that they could see and meet their beloved son once again. All sense of despondency, dismay, sadness and perplexity was now replaced with that of excess of joy, happiness, cheer and bliss. (Chanda line no. 3)

[Note—¹To wit, Lord Ram told the mothers that he and Sita and Laxman were fine; he asked them how they were, and exchanged other pleasantries in a general way. The Lord hugged the mothers who embraced him tightly in return, kissing him and caressing him repeatedly like a mother would to her son whom she meets after a very long time, especially when their parting was under a very unpleasant and sad situation, and uncertainty marked the chances of their reunion in the future.]

दो०. जेटेउ तनय सुमित्राँ राम चरन रति जानि ।
 रामहि मिलत कैकई हृदयँ बहुत सकुचानि ॥ ६ (क) ॥
 लछिमन सब मातन्ह मिलि हरषे आसिष पाइ ।
 कैकइ कहँ पुनि पुनि मिले मन कर छोभु न जाइ ॥ ६ (ख) ॥

dōhā.

bhēṭē'u tanaya sumitrām̐ rāma carana rati jāni.
 rāmahi milata kaika'ī hr̥dayam̐ bahuta sakucāni. 6 (a).
 lachimana saba mātanha mili haraṣē āsiṣa pā'i.
 kaika'i kahaṃ puni puni milē mana kara chōbhu na jā'i. 6 (b).

Sumitra, the mother of Laxman, met her son very lovingly as she was pleased that he was very committed to serve the holy feet of Lord Ram¹.

Meanwhile, Lord Ram met Kaikeyi who was very remorseful and felt shy in meeting the Lord². (Doha no. 6-a)

Laxman too met all the mothers, and received their cheerful and heartfelt blessings.

Like Lord Ram, Laxman met Kaikeyi and paid his respects to her repeatedly, but his bitter feelings for her would not leave him³. (Doha no. 6-b)

[Note—¹At the time of Lord Ram's departure for the forest 14 years ago, Laxman had gone to his mother Sumitra to seek her permission to let him accompany the Lord to the forest. Sumitra was overwhelmed with sorrows, but she was very glad that her son had chosen to serve the Lord and to be by his side during such adverse time. She not only gladly permitted Laxman to go with Lord Ram but had also advised him to treat Lord Ram and Sita as his parents, and serve them accordingly. She had also said that a mother whose son has devotion and love for Lord Ram is a most fortunate mother. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 73—to Chanda line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 75.}]

So therefore, Sumitra was exceptionally happy that her son Laxman had fulfilled her wishes and had done what she expected from him. Remember: The epic "Ram Charit Manas" is a book that has a very high quotient of the virtues of devotion and love for Lord Ram, who was an incarnation of the Supreme Being, incorporated in its texture of its fabric in such an inseparable way that it forms the basic principle on which the entire edifice of the story stands, and this single factor also makes this book singularly valuable from the spiritual perspective. Hence, Sumitra's appreciation of Laxman for his singular devotion for Lord Ram more than anything else fits in well with the general theme of this classic story.

²It was Kaikeyi who was responsible for sending Lord Ram to 14 years of forest living. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 29.}

So naturally she was overcome with a grave sense of remorse and felt extremely shy while meeting Lord Ram upon his arrival home. It is because though she had been instrumental in sending Lord Ram to the forest and thought that she had played her game very expertly, but all subsequent developments had shown her the gravity of the mistake she has made, and that this mistake was so irreparable and the darkest stain on her life that she would be burdened with guilt and shamed with ignominy for the rest of her living days. She sincerely repented thereafter, but the damage was already done.

Nevertheless, Lord Ram had forgiven her from the very beginning—for the Lord knew that Kaikeyi had done what was necessary to be done, for she had actually helped Lord Ram to fulfill his mission of eliminating the scourge of the cruel demons led by their ferocious king Ravana by sending the Lord to the forest along with Sita and Laxman, so that this mission could be accomplished. Plainly speaking, Kaikeyi had served Lord Ram and had made the single greatest sacrifice amongst all the

characters of the story by inviting a life-long burden of shame and ignominy in order to help Lord Ram fulfill his promise made to the gods and mother earth. It was a subtle wish of Lord Ram himself that things must be somehow maneuvered so that he can go to the forest. Taking a cue from Lord Ram, the gods then prevailed upon goddess Saraswati, the goddess of wisdom and speech, to arrange things in such a way that the Lord could go to the forest. So it was actually Saraswati who would, though very reluctantly, turn the mind of Kaikeyi's maid Manthara, who in turn instigated her mistress Kaikeyi to bring about the Lord's exit to the forest. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede Doha no. 10; and Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 11—to Doha no. 12.}

The fact of the matter is that instead of harbouring any ill-will against Kaikeyi, Lord Ram was actually grateful to her, for had she not made this great sacrifice of her own reputation, and willingly accept a life of humiliation, scorn, ignominy and castigation by the society, as well as by her own son Bharat who is believed not to have talked with her for the rest of her life for being instrumental in sending Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman to the forest*, the demons would have continued to terrorise the world, and the very purpose of Lord Vishnu coming down to earth as Lord Ram would have been defeated. {*Apropos: Geetawali Ramayan, Uttar Kand, verse no. 37.}

Earlier, when Bharat had gone to Chirakoot along with his whole family and a large retinue of citizens of Ayodhya as well as all the chief courtiers and a large army in an attempt to plead with Lord Ram to bring him back to Ayodhya, it is to be noted that at that time too Lord Ram had met mother Kaikeyi first, before meeting other mothers, including Kaushalya and Sumitra. Lord Ram had fell at her feet and assuaged her feeling, telling her not to feel regretful and remorseful as everything is destined and governed by fate, for which no individual should be blamed. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 244.}

So now here, when Lord Ram met Kaikeyi he found that she was very ashamed of herself; so therefore the Lord took extra care to comfort her and assuage her sad heart by speaking lovingly to her, and telling her to cheer up as she had nothing to worry and regret for.

³Laxman could not forgive Kaikeyi, like Bharat, who too could not forgive her. Compare this with Lord Ram who had not only forgiven her but even tried his best to comfort her and make her feel happy.

The reason is that while Lord Ram knew how important and necessary a role Kaikeyi had played in helping him accomplish his mission of eliminating the demons, and the great sacrifice of her own reputation and mental peace that she had made while doing so, making the Lord become rather grateful to her and remain obliged for life, Laxman and Bharat on the other hand treated her with contempt and disdain for being instrumental in causing so much hardship to their dear brother Lord Ram whom they loved so much, and for whom they would do anything in the world to keep him happy.]

चौ०. सासुन्ह सबनि मिली बैदेही । चरनन्हि लागि हरषु अति तेही ॥ १ ॥

देहिं असीस बूझि कुसलाता । होइ अचल तुम्हार अहिवाता ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

sāsunha sabani milī baidēhī. carananhi lāgi haraṣu ati tēhī. 1.
dēhim asīsa būjhi kusalātā. hō'i acala tumhāra ahivātā. 2.

Sita, the daughter of Videha (king Janak; “baidēhī”) met all her mothers-in-law and felt happy by touching their feet as a gesture of paying her respects to them (and the mothers-in-law too felt equally happy to meet Sita)¹. (1)

All the mothers-in-law enquired about her welfare, and profusely blessed her that her married life be forever happy. (2)

[Note—¹In a similar scene at Chitrakoot, Sita had met all the mothers-in-law, paid her respects to them, and received their blessings in return—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 246 along with Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede it.]

सब रघुपति मुख कमल बिलोकहिं । मंगल जानि नयन जल रोकहिं ॥ ३ ॥
कनक थार आरती उतारहिं । बार बार प्रभु गात निहारहिं ॥ ४ ॥
नाना भाँति निछावरि करहीं । परमानंद हरष उर भरहीं ॥ ५ ॥

saba raghupati mukha kamala bilōkahim. maṅgala jāni nayana jala rōkahim.
3.

kanaka thāra āratī utārahim. bāra bāra prabhu gāta nihārahim. 4.
nānā bhāmṭi nichāvari karahim. paramānanda haraṣa ura bharahim. 5.

All the mothers gazed at the lotus-like charming face of Lord Raghubir (Lord Ram), and considering it to be an auspicious moment (rather than a sorrowful one when one weeps, as was the case when Lord Ram had departed for the forest), they somehow tried to hold back their tears that were on the verge of dropping down from their wet eyes¹. (3)

The mothers held in their hands golden plates on which were arranged lighted lamps, and they waved these lights in front of Lord Ram (as well as Sita and Laxman who were standing by either side of the Lord) as an auspicious ritual to welcome them and mark their safe arrival back home². (4)

Then the mothers, who were ecstatic with joy and their hearts filled with jubilation, delighted in liberally giving away or scattering different kinds of gifts as alms to seekers and also by way of making charities (nichāvari karahim)³ for the welfare of the three, i.e. Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman. (5)

[Note—¹These were tears of joy and ecstasy, and not of sorrow or grief. Th mothers had become very emotional and were so overwhelmed sentimentally that they had to try hard to hold back their tears that seemed to breach the bank of their eyelids and flow out in a stream. It was not a time to weep, at least openly in full public view; it was an auspicious moment of joy and cheer, for Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman had returned safely from a long absence in the forest. Shedding tears on this occasion would be odd and inauspicious, as tears are usually shed on unhappy and sad occasions, such as on separation from dear ones, but not on the occasion of being

reunited with them. But excess of joy and ecstasy also bring out tears of happiness from the eyes as are moments of sorrow and grief. The mothers had a hard time in fighting back their tears which were building up on the margins of their eyes like a great flood ready to breach the bank of a river.

The facial expression of the mothers revealed all; while the pearls of tears dangled from the edges of their eyes, and perhaps some even rolled down unawares on their cheeks, the stiff muscles of their faces and the taut lips, the continuous movement of the muscles in their throats that indicated that they were trying to stifle sobs which they fought to suppress, and their hands holding the end of the scarves pressed against their mouths, showed clearly how emotionally moved all the mothers were.

²This ritual is called ‘Doing Aarti’ of a highly respected person. It is usually done when such a person comes to someone’s home. In a temple however, it is a routine ritual performed before the consecrated Deity to pay respects to the God that the installed idol represents.

Presently, Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman had come home after a very long time of 14 years. So the mothers perform the ritual of the ‘Aarti’ to welcome them in a ceremonious way, as well as to ward off any evil eye of the devil that may, by any misfortune, be lurking somewhere, ready to cast its malicious glance upon them.

A similar sight was also witnessed when Lord Ram and his other brothers returned to the city after their marriage—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 346 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it.

³On auspicious occasions, people, in accordance with their abilities to give, make liberal charities and give alms to alms-seekers as a gesture of doing some meritorious deed, as it would help in accrual of some auspicious reward for them as well as for those for whom, or on whose behalf, such noble deeds are done. On this occasion, the mothers did it so that Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman are blessed by those who receive such largesse.]

कौसल्या पुनि पुनि रघुबीरहि । चितवति कृपासिंधु रनधीरहि ॥ ६ ॥
हृदयं बिचारति बारहिं बारा । कवन भाँति लंकापति मारा ॥ ७ ॥
अति सुकुमार जुगल मेरे बारे । निसिचर सुभट महाबल भारे ॥ ८ ॥

kausalyā puni puni raghubīrahi. citavati krpāsindhu ranadhīrahi. 6.
hr̥dayam̐ bicāraṭi bārahiṁ bārā. kavana bhām̐ti laṅkāpati mārā. 7.
aṭi sukumāra jugala mērē bārē. nisicara subhaṭa mahābala bhārē. 8.

Mother Kaushalya repeatedly glanced, with a lot of affection and wonderment, at Lord Raghubir (Lord Ram) who was an ocean of grace, compassion, mercy and kindness (krpāsindhu), and an invincible warrior in the battle-field (ranadhīrahi). (6)

She repeatedly contemplated in her heart and wondered in amazement: ‘How did my two sons (“jugala mērē bārē”; i.e. Lord Ram and Laxman)¹, who are still very young and tender (aṭi sukumāra), have been able to slay the Lord of Lanka (Ravana)

and the demons who were all renowned for their ferociousness, bravery and strength of arms?’ (8)

[Note—¹It is to be noted that mother Kaushalya does not distinguish between her own son ‘Lord Ram’ and Laxman who was the son of Sumitra; she treats both the brothers as her own sons.

Not only Lord Ram and Laxman, mother Kaushalya had treated Bharat too with the same degree of affection, though it was for Bharat for whom his mother Kaikeyi had played the devil’s part in sending Lord Ram to the forest so that her son could ascend the throne of the kingdom of Ayodhya unchallenged. This would be evident when we read the story of ‘Ram Charit Manas’ where Bharat goes to meet Kaushalya after his return to Ayodhya and discovering all the misfortunes that had befallen upon the family and the city in the wake of the mischief created by his own mother Kaikeyi, which resulted in the death of his father king Dasrath, and Lord Ram going to the forest with Sita and Laxman. During this meeting, mother Kaushalya showered all the affections she could muster upon the saddened Bharat, comforting him and assuaging his distraught heart, and assuring him by all her gestures that neither she nor Lord Ram harbour any ill-will against him whatever. We also find here that Shatrughan, the younger sibling of Bharat, too was equally affected by the unfortunate events, and he too was shown the same affection by mother Kaushalya. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 163—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 169.]

Nowhere one would discern that Kaushalya has ever made a distinction between the four brothers, Lord Ram, Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan; she treated them all as her own sons. This was the singular greatness of her heart. Compare this remarkably noble attitude of Kaushalya, and the greatness of her heart, with that of Kaikeyi who was very selfish and cunning to the hilt, as she had slyly schemed to make her son Bharat the king of Ayodhya, while having no compunctions nor any guilty conscience in being instrumental in sending Lord Ram and Laxman to the forest so that all decks could be cleared for Bharat’s ascension to the throne without any challenge. That her nefarious designs backfired and served her no gain is a different thing.]

दो०. लछिमन अरु सीता सहित प्रभुहि बिलोकति मातु ।

परमानंद मगन मन पुनि पुनि पुलकित गातु ॥ ७ ॥

dōhā.

lachimana aru sītā sahita prabhuhi bilōkati mātu.

paramānanda magana mana puni puni pulakita gātu. 7.

As mother Kaushalya gazed affectionately at Laxman as well as at Lord Ram standing alongside Sita, her heart brimmed over with joy and ecstasy as she was overwhelmed with extreme sense of felicity and happiness, even as repeated waves of thrill passed over her entire body. (Doha no. 7)

चौ०. लंकापति कपीस नल नीला । जामवंत अंगद सुभसीला ॥ १ ॥

हनुमदादि सब बानर बीरा । धरे मनोहर मनुज सरीरा ॥ २ ॥
 भरत सनेह सील ब्रत नेमा । सादर सब बरनहिं अति प्रेमा ॥ ३ ॥
 देखि नगरबासिन्ह कै रीती । सकल सराहहिं प्रभु पद प्रीती ॥ ४ ॥

caupāī.

laṅkāpati kapīsa nala nīlā. jāmavanta aṅgada subhasīlā. 1.
 hanumadādi saba bānara bīrā. dharē manōhara manuja sarīrā. 2.
 bharata sanēha sīla brata nēmā. sādara saba baranahim ati prēmā. 3.
 dēkhi nagarabāsinha kai rītī. sakala sarāhahim prabhu pada prītī. 4.

The Lord of Lanka (i.e. Vibhishan), the Lord of the monkeys (i.e. Sugriv), Nala, Neela, Jamvant (the chief of the bear community), Angad (the crown prince of Kishkindha, the kingdom of the monkey race), Hanuman, and all other monkey warriors having virtuous characters and auspicious nature (who had accompanied Lord Ram on the Pushpak plane), had assumed human forms (when they landed in Ayodhya). (1-2)

As they observed Bharat and the nobility of his attitude and demeanours, they were all in praise of him and his excellent virtues; they lauded him and affectionately applauded him for the virtues of immaculate devotion and love that he had, for his good manners, gracious nature, great civility and courteousness, for his adherence to auspicious vows and upholding his words of honour, and for all other strictness of austerities and penances that he had so diligently observed¹. (3)

Similarly, they also noted the auspicious ways of life, the nobility of attitude, the singularly excellent nature, and the virtuous character of the citizens of Ayodhya. They especially remarked and appreciated the love and devotion that these citizens had for Lord Ram². (4)

[Note—¹The great sage Bharadwaj was all praises for Bharat as is evident in the following selected verses of Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand: (i) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 207; (ii) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 208; (iii) Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 210.

The deity of the holy pilgrim place known as Triveni had lauded Bharat in glowing terms in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 205 along with Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede it.

Lord Ram has himself praised Bharat in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 231—to Doha no. 232.

Gods too had praised Bharat in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precedes Doha no. 233.

Later on, when Bharat decided to live like a recluse on the outskirts of Ayodhya for the entire period that Lord Ram would live like a hermit in the forest, everyone had great praise for Bharat. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 325—to Doha no. 326.

²The excellent nature and characters of the citizens of Ayodhya, as well as of the city of Ayodhya itself, have been narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 20—to Doha no. 21; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 22; (iii) Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede Doha no. 25; (iv) Doha

no. 26 along with Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede it; (v) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 27—to Doha no. 30.]

पुनि रघुपति सब सखा बोलाए । मुनि पद लागहु सकल सिखाए ॥ ५ ॥
 गुर बसिष्ठ कुलपूज्य हमारे । इन्ह की कृपाँ दनुज रन मारे ॥ ६ ॥
 ए सब सखा सुनहु मुनि मेरे । भए समर सागर कहँ बेरे ॥ ७ ॥
 मम हित लागि जन्म इन्ह हारे । भरतहु ते मोहि अधिक पिआरे ॥ ८ ॥
 सुनि प्रभु बचन मगन सब भए । निमिष निमिष उपजत सुख नए ॥ ९ ॥

puni raghupati saba sakhā bōlā'ē. muni pada lāgahu sakala sikhā'ē. 5.
 gura basiṣṭa kulapūjya hamārē. inha kī kṛpām̐ danuja rana mārē. 6.
 ē saba sakhā sunahu muni mērē. bha'ē samara sāgara kaham̐ bērē. 7.
 mama hita lāgi janma inha hārē. bhāratahu tē mōhi adhika pi'ārē. 8.
 suni prabhu bacana magana saba bha'ē. nimiṣa nimiṣa upajata sukha na'ē. 9.

Then Lord Raghupati (Lord Sri Ram) called all his friends and advised them to touch the feet of the sages assembled there. (5)

The Lord specially pointed out his royal priest, sage Vasistha, to them and said: 'My friends, this is sage Vasistha, our revered family priest and moral preceptor. It is his blessings that we have been successful in slaying the demons in the battle-field.' (6)

Then the Lord turned to sage Vasistha and introduced his friends to him, saying: 'Listen my dear sage, all these are my dear friends. They have been like a bridge for me as they have enabled me to cross the symbolic ocean of war by helping me all through it and finally attain victory¹. (7)

They had staked their own lives for my sake. Truly, they are dearer to me than even Bharat is². (8)

Hearing such words of praise for themselves, all of them (the Lord's friends from Lanka and Kishkindha) were overwhelmed with exhilaration and filled with great delight. Each passing moment made them ecstatic and overcome with joy³. (9)

[Note—¹To wit, I owe my victory to them; had it not been for their help it would not have been possible for me to win the war of Lanka and recover Sita. So therefore, just like a bridge that helps a person cross over from one side to the other side of a vast body of water that forms a formidable obstacle before him, blocking his path, almost breaking his spirits and hindering his progress, these friends of mine have made it possible for me to cross the vast ocean of misfortunes and hopelessness that were stacked high up against me, especially with the daunting prospect of winning a war against ferocious enemies such as the demons were and retrieving Sita against all odds. So I am extremely thankful and obliged of them.

²On the face it seems that Lord Ram's words would have made Bharat feel embarrassed. But relations between the two loving brothers, Lord Ram and Bharat, were too deep and sound to be so easily affected by some causal remark made by

Lord Ram just to emphasize the fact that he was very thankful and grateful to his friends from Lanka and Kishkindha who had helped him during severe times of adversity, when the Lord was all alone in an alien land, far away from his own country, family and friends, and faced with a grave situation. Everyone in Ayodhya acknowledged the great help these friends of Lanka and Kishkindha had extended to Lord Ram, and everyone, including Bharat himself, would have thanked them profusely for helping the Lord win the war of Lanka so that he could come back home to them in Ayodhya, safely and happily.

Bharat realized that this remark of Lord Ram was made just to please his friends and it was a gesture of goodwill for them, and nothing else. Bharat was sure that it was not meant to insult him by any means. On Lord Ram's part, he had so much confidence in Bharat and so sure of his wisdom that the Lord had not a trace of doubt that Bharat would take umbrage at his remark and read it in the wrong light.

³Obviously they were all very thankful to Lord Ram for lavishly praising them for their efforts in full public view.]

दो०. कौसल्या के चरनन्हि पुनि तिन्ह नायउ माथ ।
आसिष दीन्हे हरषि तुम्ह प्रिय मम जिमि रघुनाथ ॥ ८ (क) ॥
सुमन बृष्टि नभ संकुल भवन चले सुखकंद ।
चढ़ी अटारिन्ह देखहिं नगर नारि नर बृंद ॥ ८ (ख) ॥

dōhā.

kausalyā kē carananhi puni tinha nāya'u mātha.
āsiṣa dīnhē haraṣi tumha priya mama jimi raghunātha. 8 (a).
sumana br̥ṣṭi nabha saṅkula bhavana calē sukhakanda.
caṛhī aṭārinha dēkhahim nagara nāri nara br̥nda. 8 (b).

Next (i.e. after paying their respects to sage Vasistha and others), all of them (Vibhishan, Sugriv, Nala, Neela, Jamvant, Angad, Hanuman and the rest) bowed their heads before mother Kaushalya. She gladly blessed them, saying courteously: 'You are all as dear to me as his Lord Ram.' (Doha no. 8-a)

The whole sky was obscured by a rain of flowers¹ as Lord Ram, who was an embodiment of all that provides joy, happiness, felicity and bliss, wended his way to the royal palace within the city.

The male and female citizens of the city went up on the terraces and balconies of their homes from where they jubilantly observed the celebratory procession that accompanied Lord Ram as he walked slowly towards his home. (Doha no. 8-b)

[Note—¹The flowers were showered from the heavens by the gods, as well as by the citizens who had mounted on the terraces and balconies of their homes from where they showered flowers upon the Lord as he walked through the streets of the city towards the palace.]

चौ०. कंचन कलस बिचित्र सँवारे । सबहिं धरे सजि निज निज द्वारे ॥ १ ॥

बंदनवार पताका केतू । सबन्धि बनाए मंगल हेतू ॥ २ ॥
 बीथीं सकल सुगंध सिंचाई । गजमनि रचि बहु चौक पुराई ॥ ३ ॥
 नाना भाँति सुमंगल साजे । हरषि नगर निसान बहु बाजे ॥ ४ ॥

caupāī.

kañcana kalasa bicitra samvārē. sabahiṃ dharē saji nija nija dvārē. 1.
 bandanavāra patākā kētū. sabanhi banā'ē maṅgala hētū. 2.
 bīthiṃ sakala sugandha siñcā'īm. gajamani raci bahu cauka purā'īm. 3.
 nānā bhāmṭi sumaṅgala sājē. haraṣi nagara nisāna bahu bājē. 4.

Every household of the city placed golden pots that were beautifully decorated and adorned with auspicious materials on the thresholds of their homes. (1)

Colourfully decorated festoons, buntings and flags were made and put up on the doorways of every home by the citizens to celebrate this happy occasion and also as a sign of auspiciousness. (2)

All the streets and lanes were sprinkled with scented water and perfumes. Colourful squares were painted on the ground, as well as those that existed at crossroads in the city, and were decorated with special types of pearl-beads known as 'Gajmukta'¹. (3)

The whole city was artfully decorated with a variety of auspicious materials and colourful designs. Music began playing from kettle-drums.

To wit, the whole atmosphere was one of mass celebration, as if a large public fete or fair was being organized in the city to welcome Lord Ram back home². (4)

[Note—¹The “Gajmukta” is the dried secretion from the glands on the head of adult elephants. This viscous secretion dries up to form beads, and since they are rare they have a high value. The word “Gaja” means an elephant, and “Mukta” means pearl. Hence, the composite word “Gajmukta” means ‘pearls obtained from an elephant’.

In ancient times, kings had huge numbers of elephants that formed a major section of their armies. So there was no dearth of such Gajmuktas.

They can be compared to corals, and shells of oysters and conches that are obtained from seas and oceans, and used for decorative purposes.

²A similar sight of mass celebrations was seen in Ayodhya when Lord Ram and his three brothers, Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan, were born. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 195 along with Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precede it.

It was also witnessed when Lord Ram and his brothers returned to the city after their marriage—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 344—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 348.]

जहँ तहँ नारि निछावरि करहीं । देहिं असीस हरष उर भरहीं ॥ ५ ॥
 कंचन थार आरतीं नाना । जुबतीं सजें करहिं सुभ गाना ॥ ६ ॥
 करहिं आरती आरतिहर कें । रघुकुल कमल बिपिन दिनकर कें ॥ ७ ॥

jaham̐ taham̐ nāri nichāvari karahīm. dēhim̐ asīsa haraṣa ura bharahīm. 5.
 kañcana thāra āratīm nānā. jubatīm sajēm karahīm subha gānā. 6.
 karahīm āratī āratihara kēm. raghukula kamala bipina dinakara kēm. 7.

Everywhere the ladies of the city were scattering gifts and making offerings to honour and bless Lord Ram as he slowly walked on the streets towards his home, and while doing so they felt very ecstatic in their hearts (that they could personally participate in the ceremony to mark their beloved Lord's return home)¹. (5)

The ladies decorated golden plates with a variety of auspicious things and performed Aarti of the Lord while singing auspicious songs to mark the occasion². (6)

To wit, the exhilarated ladies were performing the Aarti of the Lord who is an eliminator of sorrows, miseries, torments and tribulations of everyone (āratihara), of the Lord who is like a sun (dinakara) for the garden of lotus flowers represented by the illustrious family of King Raghu of Ayodhya (raghukula kamala bipina)¹.

[Note—¹To wit, the ecstatic ladies of Ayodhya welcomed Lord Ram by liberally showering gifts of all manners upon him, while blessing the Lord and praying for his happiness. Meanwhile, the scattered gifts were immediately collected by others who were themselves scattering gifts of their own. Everyone participated in this ceremonial way of welcoming the Lord back home. Those who collected such scattered gifts did not do so because they lacked anything, but because they wished to keep them as a souvenir, a memento, a token by which to remember throughout their lives the happy moment of the Lord's arrival.

²When Lord returned to Ayodhya from Janakpur after his marriage, a similar sight is observed at that time too. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precede Doha no. 348.

³Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 4 where a similar metaphor is used.]

पुर सोभा संपति कल्याणा । निगम सेष सारदा बखाना ॥ ८ ॥
 तेउ यह चरित देखि ठगि रहहीं । उमा तासु गुन नर किमि कहहीं ॥ ९ ॥

pura sōbhā sampati kalyānā. nigama sēṣa sārādā bakhānā. 8.
 tē'u yaha carita dēkhi ṭhagi rahahīm. umā tāsu guna nara kimi kahahīm. 9.

[Lord Shiva makes the following observation about Ayodhya to goddess Uma, his divine consort, who was listening to this narration—]

‘The singular beauty and the exemplary charm of the fascinatingly wonderful city of Ayodhya, its prosperity and wealth, and its all pervading aura of auspiciousness and all-round welfare, were so remarkable and marked that they were extolled and glorified in laudatory terms by the Vedas (Nigams), Lord Seshnath (the celestial serpent with a thousand mouths) and goddess Saraswati (the patron goddess of speech and knowledge).¹’ (8)

[Then Shiva asks her—] ‘Verily indeed, when even they (Vedas, Sheshnath and Saraswati) were so spell-bound by the grandeur and excellent qualities of Ayodhya that they stood mesmerized by it, then say Uma, how is it possible for a human being to describe it? [To wit, Ayodhya was so exceptionally charming that no one can describe how beautiful, grand and magnificent it was; how extraordinary it was at the time Lord Ram came back after 14 years of living in the forest.]² (9)

[Note—¹Refer: Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 195.

²Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 195; (ii) Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 344—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 345; (iii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 361.]

दो०. नारि कुमुदिनीं अवध सर रघुपति बिरह दिनेस ।
अस्त भाँ बिगसत भई निरखि राम राकेस ॥ ९ (क) ॥
होहिं सगुन सुभ बिबिधि बिधि बाजहिं गगन निसान ।
पुर नर नारि सनाथ करि भवन चले भगवान ॥ ९ (ख) ॥

dōhā.

nāri kumudinīm avadha sara raghupati biraha dinēsa.
asta bha'ēm' bigasata bha'im nirakhi rāma rākēsa. 9 (a).
hōhim saguna subha bibidhi bidhi bājahim gagana nisāna.
pura nara nāri sanātha kari bhavana calē bhagavāna. 9 (b).

The women-folk, who were like water-lilies growing in a pond symbolized by the city of Ayodhya, had been withered by the scorching sun represented by their separation from Lord Ram, bloomed once again when they saw that sun set and the full moon symbolized by the arrival of Lord Ram rise in the sky of the city. (Doha no. 9-a)

Different types of auspicious signs appeared everywhere on the ground, while various kinds of musical drums were being played in the sky (by the gods).

Spreading cheer and warmth in all the directions, and pleasing and obliging everyone, the male as well as the female citizens who had gathered to welcome him, Lord Ram (bhagavāna) moved towards his own palace in the city. (Doha no. 9-b)

चौ०. प्रभु जानी कैकई लजानी । प्रथम तासु गृह गए भवानी ॥ १ ॥
ताहि प्रबोधि बहुत सुख दीन्हा । पुनि निज भवन गवन हरि कीन्हा ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

prabhu jānī kaikaī lajānī. prathama tāsū grha ga'e bhavānī. 1.
tāhi prabōdhi bahuta sukha dīnhā. puni nija bhavana gavana hari kīnhā. 2.

[Lord Shiva continued with his narration. He told goddess Bhavani, so-called as she was the consort of Bhava, another name of Lord Shiva, as follows:-]

‘Listen Bhavani (*bhavānī*)! Lord Ram realized (by way of a hunch) that Kaikeyi (his step-mother) was feeling very remorseful and ashamed of herself. So the Lord decided to go to her first (as soon as he entered the palace grounds)¹. (1)

Lord Ram comforted her in different ways², and made her feel happy and assuaged. After that the Lord went to his own palace³. (2)

[Note—¹The reader would recollect that it was Kaikeyi who had been the cause behind Lord Ram being sent to the forest for fourteen years. {Refer specifically to: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 29.}

But once she realized the enormity of the mischief she had done, the eternal ignominy, disdain and universal condemnation she had wrought on her own self for no acceptable rhyme or reason, accompanied by the intensity and immensity of grief and pain and sorrows it had let loose on the entire kingdom as well as the illustrious family of king Dasrath, resulting in his sorrowful death caused by grief of separation from Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman, with a thick pall of gloom descending like a heavy cloud of doom spreading upon the entire kingdom of Ayodhya, plunging what was a prosperous and beautiful city into a place no better than a graveyard, with even her son Bharat, for whom she had plotted this evil scheme so that he could ascend the throne of Ayodhya without a challenge from Lord Ram and Laxman, scolding her viciously and vowing never to see her face for the rest of his life—Kaikeyi finally realized the horror she had created. This immense sense of shame and regret did not leave her for the rest of her life; remorse and sadness and depression stifled her forever.

But Lord Ram was extremely forgiving, kind and compassionate. Instead being annoyed or harbouring any ill-will against her, the Lord actually thanked Kaikeyi silently for being instrumental in sending him to the forest, for otherwise his divine mission of eliminating the tyranny of the cruel demons would never have been realized. Remember: Lord Ram was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, and Vishnu had promised the gods and mother earth that he would personally ensure that Ravana and his cruel demon hordes would be eliminated so that the world can live in peace. {Apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-7 that precede Doha no. 187.}

To wit, amongst all the characters in the story of the Ramayana, if we were to consider all the aspects from all angles and make a judicious pronouncement, then we would arrive at an unanimous conclusion that Kaikeyi had served the cause of Lord Vishnu in the best possible way. She was bold enough to take a courageous step, and had sacrificed her entire reputation and name on the altar of serving Lord Vishnu in his form as Lord Ram. She accepted all-round scorn, castigation, condemnation, ridicule, spite and ignominy just to ensure that Lord Ram’s wishes could be fulfilled.

It is true that the gods too had served Lord Ram in their forms as monkeys and bears as ordered by the creator Brahma to do (apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 187—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 188), but none of them did anything that would make a devil out of them as was the case with Kaikeyi (apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 47).

The gods gained only praises and applause for their devotion and loyalty to Lord Ram and serving him in their forms as monkeys and bears, but surely not the sort of universal condemnation, extreme disdain and utter contempt that befell Kaikeyi as her share for serving the same Lord, events that scarred her life forever.

Lord Ram realized her grief and pain, as well as a sense of remorse, regret and sorrow that was burning her inner-self; the Lord felt immense pity for her and empathized with her.

So, therefore, the Lord went to meet her first in order to sooth her, to comfort her grieving and lamenting heart, to assuage her emotions by speaking to her courteously, and to tell her that he has the same affection and respect for her now as he had for her in the beginning, and that this affection and respect is not a fraction less than what he has for the other mothers, i.e. mother Kaushalya (his own mother) and mother Sumitra (Laxman's mother).

A similar event occurred earlier in Chitrakoot too—there also Lord Ram made it a point to meet Kaikeyi and pay his respects to her to comfort her first before meeting other mothers. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 244 along with Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede it.}

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 244.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 348.]

कृपासिंधु जब मंदिर गए । पुर नर नारि सुखी सब भए ॥ ३ ॥
गुर बसिष्ठ द्विज लिए बुलाई । आजु सुघरी सुदिन समुदाई ॥ ४ ॥
सब द्विज देहु हरषि अनुसासन । रामचंद्र बैठहिं सिंघासन ॥ ५ ॥
मुनि बसिष्ठ के बचन सुहाए । सुनत सकल बिग्रह अति भाए ॥ ६ ॥

krpāsindhu jaba mandira ga'ē. pura nara nāri sukhī saba bha'ē. 3.
gura basiṣṭha dvija li'ē bulā'ī. āju sugharī sudina samudā'ī. 4.
saba dvija dēhu haraṣi anusāsana. rāmacandra baiṭhahim siṅghāsana. 5.
muni basiṣṭha kē bacana suhā'ē. sunata sakala bipranha ati bhā'ē. 6.

When Lord Ram, who was like an ocean of mercy, grace, kindness and compassion (krpāsindhu), entered his palace, the men-folk as well as the women-folk of the city felt very happy and contented. (3)

Thence, guru Vasistha called all the senior Brahmins and told them: 'Today is a very auspicious day, and all good stars have arranged themselves in such a way that they are in harmony with each other. (4)

So therefore, I request all of you Brahmins to cheerfully grant your permission so that Lord Ramchandra could sit on the throne of Ayodhya (and be anointed as its King).' (5)

The pleasant words of guru Vasistha were warmly welcomed by all the Brahmins. (6)

कहहिं बचन मृदु बिप्र अनेका । जग अभिराम राम अभिषेका ॥ ७ ॥
अब मुनिबर बिलंब नहिं कीजै । महाराज कहँ तिलक करीजै ॥ ८ ॥

kahahim bacana mṛdu bipra anēkā. jaga abhirāma rāma abhiṣēkā. 7.
aba munibara bilamba nahim kījai. mahārāja kaham̐tilaka karījai. 8.

A number of Brahmins spoke simultaneously, saying cheerfully and very courteously that they were all unanimously in favour of Lord Ram ascending the throne and anointed as the King. 'Verily indeed, the news of Lord Ram's ascension to the throne and being appointed as the King is a most welcome and auspicious news; there is nothing better one could hear. (7)

Oh great sage (Vasistha). Do not delay now; anoint Lord Ram as a King forthwith.¹
(8)

[Note—¹The elders wished to waste no time in crowning Lord Ram, for they have had a bitter experience earlier when a little delay caused by making elaborate arrangements, decorating the city and planning for celebrations had thrown a spanner in the whole affair when the crooked Fate got a window of opportunity and maneuvered things maliciously in such, and so suddenly turned the tide, that Lord Ram had to go to the forest, and the day that was meant for rejoicing and festivities, when he would sit on the throne, was converted into a day of wailing and grief and lamentations. Devil is very cunning and has an evil nature inasmuch as it derives immense pleasure in spoiling things when least expected, and rejoices when others grieve.

So therefore, the Brahmins advised sage Vasistha, the royal priest, to make haste and anoint Lord Ram as a King-Emperor as quickly as possible, without wasting time on formalities.]

दो०. तब मुनि कहेउ सुमंत्र सन सुनत चलेउ हरषाइ ।
रथ अनेक बहु बाजि गज तुरत सँवारे जाइ ॥ १० (क) ॥
जहँ तहँ धावन पठइ पुनि मंगल द्रव्य मगाइ ।
हरष समेत बसिष्ट पद पुनि सिरु नायउ आइ ॥ १० (ख) ॥

dōhā.

taba muni kahē'u sumantra sana sunata calē'u haraṣā'i.
ratha anēka bahu bāji gaja turata sam̐vārē jā'i. 10 (a).
jaham̐ taham̐ dhāvana paṭha'i puni maṅgala drabya magā'i.
haraṣa samēta basiṣṭa pada puni siru nāya'u ā'i. 10 (b).

After receiving an unanimous permission to go ahead with Lord Ram's crowning ceremony, guru Vasistha summoned the chief minister named Sumantra, and gave him necessary instructions.

As soon as Sumantra received his orders, he cheerfully proceeded to carry out his mandate. He went and readied a number of horses and chariots¹. (Doha no. 10-a)

Meanwhile, messengers and heralds were speedily dispatched in different directions with the errand to bring water from holy places as quickly as possible².

He then came back and bowed his head before guru Vasistha to report to him that all necessary arrangements were being made, and things are speedily being put in place for the Lord's crowning ceremony. (Doha no. 10-b)

[Note—¹The horses and chariots were readied to participate in the ceremonial royal procession that would mark the crowning of Lord Ram as the King of the kingdom of Ayodhya. Since Ayodhya was a vast kingdom with extensive territory, and its domain and sovereignty extended over other smaller principalities, it was no less than an Empire, and hence Lord Ram assumed the role of an Emperor too. The royal procession would leave the royal palace and pass slowly through the streets of Ayodhya that were lined by jubilant citizens who would shower flowers on Lord Ram and cheer him along as he rides past them, and finally the procession would enter the courtyard of the royal court where the decorated throne was kept ready for the coronation ceremony.]

²On close observations we conclude that the actual anointment ceremony must have been held a day or two later, because the messengers and heralds must have taken at least a day to come back with holy waters from places far off. No matter how swiftly they went, but they could not perform a magic by going thither and coming hither before the sun set that day.

Therefore, the earliest Lord Ram could have ascended the throne was on the day that followed the day of his arrival; it could also have been two days from the day of his arrival, if not more, if we take into account the necessity of making elaborate arrangements for a royal ascension ceremony of a great kingdom.]

[PAUSE 8 FOR A NINE-DAY RECITATION]

चौ०. अवधपुरी अति रुचिर बनाई । देवन्ह सुमन बृष्टि झरि लाई ॥ १ ॥
 राम कहा सेवकन्ह बुलाई । प्रथम सखन्ह अन्हवावहु जाई ॥ २ ॥
 सुनत बचन जहँ तहँ जन धाए । सुग्रीवादि तुरत अन्हवाए ॥ ३ ॥
 caupāī.

avadhapurī ati rucira banāī. dēvanha sumana br̥ṣṭi jhari lāī. 1.
 rāma kahā sēvakanha bulāī. prathama sakhanha anhavāvahu jāī. 2.
 sunata bacana jaham̐ taham̐ jana dhāē. sugrīvādi turata anhavāē. 3.

The capital city of the kingdom of Ayodhya, known as 'Avadh-Puri', was decked up magnificently, in all the best of finery (like a bride) so much that it inspired the gods to shower a rain of an abundance of flowers (of all hues and shapes) on it¹. (1)

Lord Ram called his attendants and instructed them: 'First of all (i.e. on priority basis) go and get all my friends (who had disembarked from the plane with the Lord) to have their baths.'² (2)

Upon receiving the Lord's instructions, the servitors immediately went here and there³ to carry out these orders. They arranged for getting Sugriv and others bathed. (3)

[Note—¹This is the third occasion when Ayodhya is decorated magnificently, in all finery, rendering an exceptional beauty to it, which so much fascinated the gods that they rained down an abundance of flowers of all colours and shapes to express their joy. The first occasion was when Lord Ram and his three brothers were born—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 194; Chaupai line nos. 2-8 that precede Doha no. 195.

The second occasion is when Lord Ram and his brothers returned to Ayodhya with their brides after their marriage ceremony in Janakpur—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 344—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 345; Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 347.

²Now, these ‘friends’ from Lanka were Lord Ram’s guests of honour. The Lord was extending his warmest hospitality to them, and therefore he first ensured that they were properly lodged and all necessary arrangements were made for them; none of them should ever feel neglected even in the slightest.

³The friends of Lord Ram, Vibhishan, Sugriv, Angad, Jamvant, Nala, Neela, Hanuman etc. (apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 8) were so excited and fascinated by the charming city of Ayodhya, and were so overwhelmed by the warmth with which they were received by its citizens, that they had gone here and there to have a view of the fine city, and even visited homes of the citizens who enthusiastically invited them to come in and have some refreshments.

Nay, the citizens not only opened their homes for these special guests but even vied with each other to have one of them visit their homes, as it would bring them honour and give them a lot of pleasure to serve them. Those of the guests who preferred to go around the city for sight-seeing were accompanied by enthusiastic crowds of people, young and old, who gladly showed them around, pointing out to them the landmarks of this famous city and cheerfully acting as expert guides to lead the honourable guests across the streets and squares.

Here and there and everywhere, crowds of joyous citizens thronged them; some trying to shake hands with them or simply to touch them, some trying to hug them, some wishing to talk with them, some asking their names, some offering flowers and fruits and sweet drinks, some cajoling them to step inside their homes and have a little chat, rest and a bite of refreshment, and so on and so forth the infectious warmth of welcome spread, so much so that the guests were virtually swept off their feet and borne aloft in the tidal wave of warmth and affection that swamped them.

So by the time Lord Ram’s attendants went out to carry out their orders, they couldn’t find these guests at the place the plane had landed, because in the meantime all of them had already spread across the large city—some visiting homes, and others roaming around for sight-seeing, surrounded by a huge jubilant crowd wherever they went.

To wit, these messengers had a tough time to first locate them, and then to push back the zealous citizens so that the guests could be brought to their respective lodging places and advised to take a bath as requested by the Lord.]

पुनि करुनानिधि भरतु हँकारे । निज कर राम जटा निरुआरे ॥ ४ ॥

अन्हवाए प्रभु तीनिउ भाई । भगत बछल कृपाल रघुराई ॥ ५ ॥

भरत भाग्य प्रभु कोमलताई । सेष कोटि सत सकहिं न गाई ॥ ६ ॥

puni karunānidhi bharatu hamkārē. nija kara rāma jaṭā niru'ārē. 4.
anhavā'ē prabhu tīni'u bhā'ī. bhagata bachala kṛpāla raghurā'ī. 5.
bharata bhāgya prabhu kōmalatā'ī. sēṣa kōṭi sata sakahim na gā'ī. 6.

Then Lord Ram, who was like an ocean of mercy, compassion and kindness (karunānidhi) called in Bharat, and with his own hands the Lord disentangled (or unwound; un-girdled; unlocked) his matted lock of hairs¹. (4)

Thence, Lord Ram, the Lord who is extremely gracious and merciful towards his devotees (bhagata bachala) and is the illustrious Lord in the race of King Raghu (raghurā'ī), advised all his three brothers (Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan) to have their baths. (5)

Verily indeed, even countless Seshnaths (who have thousands of mouths with which they could speak simultaneously) would not be competent enough to praise the good fortunes and glory of Bharat (bharata bhāgya)², and the immensity of Lord Ram's tenderness of heart and softness of feelings (prabhu kōmalatā'ī) in a sufficient way. (6)

[Note—¹After his return from Chitrakoot, Bharat had lived like a hermit on the outskirts of Ayodhya. He had attired himself as a recluse, and this included keeping his lock of hairs matted as a crown on his head* in the same fashion as he had seen Lord Ram wearing it when the two brothers met in Chitrakoot. {*Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 324.}

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 205—where Bharat is praised by the deity of Triveni, the holy pilgrim site of the confluence of three holy rivers; (ii) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 210—where sage Bharadwaj praises Bharat; (iii) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 259—where Lord Ram himself praises Bharat; and (iv) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 326—where the citizens of Ayodhya praise Bharat.]

पुनि निज जटा राम बिबराए । गुर अनुसासन मागि नहाए ॥ ७ ॥
करि मज्जन प्रभु भूषन साजे । अंग अनंग देखि सत लाजे ॥ ८ ॥

puni nija jaṭā rāma bibarā'ē. gura anusāsana māgi nahā'ē. 7.
kari majjana prabhu bhūṣana sājē. aṅga anaṅga dēkhi sata lājē. 8.

After that (i.e. after unlocking the hairs of Bharat and getting all the brothers bathed) Lord Ram un-girdled or unlocked his own lock of matted hairs. Then, having obtained permission of his guru (sage Vasistha), the Lord took a bath (and washed his unlocked hairs). (7)

After taking a bath, the Lord attired himself in royal robes and ornaments. The Lord's form looked so exceptionally beautiful and bewitchingly charming that it shamed countless Kamdeos (the patron god of beauty and charm)¹. (8)

[Note—¹Kamdeo is said to have the most charming body amongst the pantheon of gods. This verse simply means that Lord Ram looked so magnificently handsome and charming in his clothes and ornaments that all the pride that Kamdeo might have had regarding his attractive form was crushed, putting him to shame for all his boast and pretensions.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 327; (ii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 220; (iii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 243. All these verses express identical views.]

दो०. सासुन्ह सादर जानकिहि मज्जन तुरत कराइ ।
 दिव्य बसन बर भूषन अँग अँग सजे बनाइ ॥ ११ (क) ॥
 राम बाम दिसि सोभति रमा रूप गुन खानि ।
 देखि मातु सब हरषीं जन्म सुफल निज जानि ॥ ११ (ख) ॥

dōhā.

sāsunha sādara jānakihi majjana turata karā'i.
 dibya basana bara bhūṣana aṁṅa aṁṅa sajē banā'i. 11 (a).
 rāma bāma disi sōbhati ramā rūpa guna khāni.
 dēkhi mātu saba haraṣīm janma suphala nija jāni. 11 (b).

Inside the palace, the mothers-in-law first got Janki (Sita) bathed, and then adorned her with beautiful clothes and magnificent ornaments that covered her entire body. (Doha no. 11-a)

Janki, who was an embodiment of beauty and virtues, and a personified form of Rama (goddess Laxmi, the divine consort of Lord Vishnu), looked glorious as she stood to the left of Lord Ram¹.

When the mothers beheld this charming sight, they felt exhilarated, and considered their life fully rewarded². (Doha no. 11-b)

[Note—¹According to established Hindu tradition, a married woman always stands or sits on the left of her husband.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chanda line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 109.

The heavenly beauty and charm of Sita was legendary. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 323.

Similarly, the sight of Lord Ram and Sita was exceptionally bewitching—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 265; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 2-6 that precede Doha no. 325.

²At the time of Lord Ram's marriage with Sita, king Dasrath, the father of the Lord, too had the same feeling. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chanda line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 325.]

सुनु खगेस तेहि अवसर ब्रह्मा सिव मुनि बृंद ।
चढ़ि बिमान आए सब सुर देखन सुखकंद ॥ ११ (ग) ॥

sunu khagēsa tēhi avasara brahmā siva muni bṛnda.
caḍhi bimāna ā'ē saba sura dēkhana sukhakanda. 11 (c).

[The saintly crow named Kaagbhusund, one of the primary narrators of this divine Story, told his listener Garud, the heavenly Bird who is also a mount of Lord Vishnu, as follows:-]

‘Listen oh king of birds (khagēsa)! At that time, Brahma the creator, Shiva the concluder, all the great sages and seers, as well as the gods who arrived in their planes—all of them assembled there to have a heavenly view of Lord Ram, who is indeed an embodiment of bliss and happiness¹. (Doha no. 11-c)

[Note—¹The Gods, Brahma, Shiva and the sages—all came to witness Lord Ram’s coronation ceremony and bless him. Earlier too, on every happy occasion they had assembled to see the Lord and bless him—whether it was the occasion of the Lord’s birth*, his marriage# or his victory in the war of Lanka\$.

*Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 196.

#Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-6 that precede Doha no. 262; Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 323; Doha no. 324; Doha no. 353 etc.

\$Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 103; Doha no. 109.]

चौ०. प्रभु बिलोकि मुनि मन अनुरागा । तुरत दिव्य सिंघासन मागा ॥ १ ॥
रबि सम तेज सो बरनि न जाई । बैठे राम द्विजन्ह सिरु नाई ॥ २ ॥
जनकसुता समेत रघुराई । पेखि प्रहरषे मुनि समुदाई ॥ ३ ॥

caupāī.

prabhu bilōki muni mana anurāgā. turata dibya siṅghāsana māgā. 1.
rabi sama tēja sō barani na jāī. baiṭhē rāma dvijanha siru nāī. 2.
janakasutā samēta raghurāī. pēkhi praharaṣē muni samudāī. 3.

Seeing Lord Ram, the sage’s (i.e. Vasistha’s) heart brimmed over with affection for him. The exhilarated sage immediately asked for a heavenly throne (which was provided to him instantly). (1)

This magnificent throne was as splendidous and radiant as the sun, and it defied all descriptions¹. Lord Ram bowed his head reverentially before the assembled Brahmins and sat down on it. (2)

Observing this beautiful sight of Lord Ram sitting on the throne (of the great kingdom of Ayodhya), with the daughter of Janak (i.e. Sita) by his side, the exalted assembly of illustrious sages and learned elders felt extremely exhilarated. (3)

[Note—¹The throne was made of pure gold, and it was studded with priceless gems that glittered. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 11.]

बेद मंत्र तब द्विजन्ह उचारे । नभ सुर मुनि जय जयति पुकारे ॥ ४ ॥
प्रथम तिलक बसिष्ट मुनि कीन्हा । पुनि सब बिप्रन्ह आयसु दीन्हा ॥ ५ ॥

bēda mantra taba dvijanha ucārē. nabha sura muni jaya jayati pukārē. 4.
prathama tilaka basiṣṭa muni kīnhā. puni saba bipranha āyasu dīnhā. 5.

Then the Brahmins recited the sacred Mantras from the Vedas (scriptures), while the gods in the sky (heavens) and the sages (on the ground) raised their hands to applaud and bless the Lord, cheering in unison: ‘Glory to the Lord; Hail the Lord and Victory be to him’. (4)

As the rituals for the anointment of Lord Ram as the King-Emperor began, it was sage Vasistha who formally started the process by making a ‘Tilak Mark’ on the Lord’s forehead first¹, which was followed by a loud chorus of blessings from all the assembled Brahmins (and elders). (5)

[Note—¹The ‘Tilak’ is a sacred mark made on the forehead of a newly appointed King as a token of his formal appointment on the throne of the kingdom, and the acceptance of his sovereignty by the subjects of that kingdom during the coronation ceremony.

This ‘Tilak Mark’ is made by using a paste of auspicious ingredients, and the ritual is accompanied by chanting of Veda Mantras and blessings from all the assembled elders of the kingdom.

Sage Vasistha was the chief priest of the kingdom of Ayodhya, and so he would obviously be the one to carry out this ritual.]

सुत बिलोकि हरषीं महतारी । बार बार आरती उत्तारी ॥ ६ ॥
बिप्रन्ह दान बिबिधि बिधि दीन्हे । जाचक सकल अजाचक कीन्हे ॥ ७ ॥
सिंघासन पर त्रिभुअन साईं । देखि सुरन्ह दुंदुभीं बजाईं ॥ ८ ॥

suta bilōki haraṣīṁ mahatārī. bāra bāra āratī utārī. 6.
bipranha dāna bibidhi bidhi dīnhē. jācaka sakala ajācaka kīnhē. 7.
siṅghāsana para tribhu'ana sālīm. dēkhi suranha dundubhīm bajā'īm. 8.

Beholding their son (Lord Ram sitting on the throne of Ayodhya), all the mothers (Kaushalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi) were thrilled and exhilarated¹. They repeatedly performed his ‘Arti’² (i.e. they waved a plate decorated with lighted earthen lamps before him as a token of blessing, for inviting good omen, and deflecting or warding

off evil spirits that may perchance think of casting an inauspicious eye on the Lord). (6)

On this auspicious occasion, different types of charities were made and alms given to Brahmins and alms-seekers so liberally that those who received these largesse themselves gave them away to others³. (7)

The Lord of the three worlds (i.e. the heaven, the earth and the nether world; the entire creation; “tribhu'ana sām”) was sitting on the Throne⁴. Seeing this most wonderful sight, the gods became ecstatic and played their musical drums and trumpets in the sky. (8)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 11-b.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 7. Here we read that the plate used to wave auspicious lighted earthen lamps before Lord Ram by the mothers was made of gold. The occasion was the Lord's arrival in Ayodhya after fourteen years in the forest.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 7. After performing the Lord's Arti to welcome him back home, liberal charities were distributed by the delighted mothers.

Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 194. The occasion here was the celebration marking the birth of Lord Ram and his three brothers in the household of the King of Ayodhya, king Dasrath. We observe here too that the receivers of various gifts gave them to others in their turn, for it was an occasion of celebration, and the gifts were meant to mark it. Whoever accepted such gifts kept some of the items with them as a memento for future generations, but they cheerfully gave the rest to others who could not make it to the palace to receive gifts themselves due to the huge crowd that had assembled and packed the palace courtyard chock-a-block. Such citizens were obliged by others who were lucky to go inside and receive the gifts, and the latter willingly shared the gifts with their fellow citizens.

Remember: Ayodhya was a wealthy and prosperous kingdom, and no one had dearth or shortage of anything that he or she would run away with free gifts and hoard them inside their homes.

⁴Till now, Lord Ram was not officially appointed as a ‘King’. Now that happy occasion had arrived. The symbolism is obvious: A King is the protector, a well-wisher, a provider of all needs, and like a father to his subjects.

So therefore, when the gods saw that Lord Ram was sitting on the Throne after being appointed a King, they were extremely delighted as now they themselves, as well as the world they are obliged to take care of, could look forward to the Lord's protection; now they had a formal King, their well-wisher and care-taker. The other reason for their joy was that Lord Ram was not an ordinary king of a worldly kingdom, but he was the Supreme Lord of the whole world. Besides this, Lord Ram was exceptionally merciful, compassionate, gracious, kind, forgiving, judicious, benevolent, munificent, courteous and noble in heart.

With such a King at the helm of affairs, what more would the subjects want? Hence, it was indeed a matter for rejoicing and an occasion for celebrations for one and all—which the gods marked by playing their musical instruments.]

छं०. नभ दुंदुभीं बाजहिं बिपुल गंधर्व किंनर गावहीं । १ ।
 नाचहिं अपछरा बृंद परमानंद सुर मुनि पावहीं ॥ २ ॥
 भरतादि अनुज बिभीषणांगद हनुमदादि समेत ते । ३ ।
 गहें छत्र चामर व्यजन धनु असि चर्म सक्ति बिराजते ॥ ४ ॥

chanda.

nabha dundubhīm bājahīm bipula gandharba kinnara gāvahīm. 1.
 nācahīm apacharā bṛnda paramānanda sura muni pāvahīm. 2.
 bharatādi anuja bibhīṣanāṅgada hanumadādi samēta tē. 3.
 gahēm chatra cāmara byajana dhanu asi carma sakti birājatē. 4.

A large number of kettle-drums sounded in the sky (as the gods beat them enthusiastically), while Gandharvas and Kinnars¹ sang merrily to the tune of this music. (Chanda line no. 1)

Meanwhile, a large crowd of Apsaras (female dancers of heaven) formed groups and danced in merry abundance to accompany the singing by their male counterparts.

To wit, the whole atmosphere was one of blissfulness, of excess of joy and happiness; so all the gods and the sages thoroughly enjoyed it and felt ecstatic. (Chanda line no. 2)

Lord Ram's younger brothers such as Bharat etc. (i.e. Laxman and Shatrughan too), and the Lord's friends such as Vibhishan, Angad, Hanuman etc. (i.e. Sugriv too), stood around the Lord on the dais, holding ceremonial umbrella, whisk, fan, bow, sword, shield, and lancet etc. in their hands². (Chanda line nos. 3-4)

[Note—¹The Ghandharvas and Kinnars are demi-gods; they are the musicians, dancers and singers of heaven.

²The three brothers and the close friends of Lord Ram stood around the throne on the dais, each holding some kind of a ceremonial paraphernalia in his hand, as a sign that that they were very close to the Lord and his close confidantes. When a formal ceremony, such as coronation of a king or the swearing-in of a head of government takes place, only a limited number of selected persons are allowed to go on the dais. These persons are persons of honour, close relatives or special guests of the newly anointed king or the newly appointed head of the government. To stand on the dais on such special occasions is a matter of great privilege and prestige.]

श्री सहित दिनकर बंस भूषन काम बहु छबि सोहई । ५ ।
 नव अंबुधर बर गात अंबर पीत सुर मन मोहई ॥ ६ ॥
 मुकुटांगदादि बिचित्र भूषन अंग अंगन्हि प्रति सजे । ७ ।

अंभोज नयन बिसाल उर भुज धन्य नर निरखंति जे ॥ ८ ॥

śrī sahita dinakara bansa bhūṣana kāma bahu chabi sōha'ī. 5.
nava ambudhara bara gāta ambara pīta sura mana mōha'ī. 6.
mukutāṅgadādi bicitra bhūṣana aṅga aṅganhi prati sajē. 7.
ambhōja nayana bisāla ura bhuja dhan'ya nara nirakhanti jē. 8.

Lord Ram, who was like a jewel of the Solar race (dinakara bansa bhūṣana), along with Sita, who was a personified form of goddess Laxmi and represented everything that is auspicious and has the quality of richness in it (śrī)—looked so exquisite, majestic and adorable as if he was a personified form of countless Kamdeos (the patron god of beauty and charm). (Chanda line no. 5)

The yellow coloured 'Pitambar' (a length of silk cloth that is wrapped around the body; the garment worn by Lord Vishnu) that was wrapped around the body of Lord Ram, which was dark-complexioned like a newly formed rain-bearing bank of dark clouds (seen during the rainy season), looked so magnificent that it mightily enthralled the gods, and charmed their minds and hearts exceedingly. (Chanda line no. 6)

A crown with a tiara or a diadem, armlets, and other magnificent ornaments adorned every part of the Lord's form. (Chanda line no. 7)

Lord Ram had eyes as large and beautiful as lotus flowers; he had a broad chest and long muscular arms.

Most lucky and privileged were those who had an auspicious view of this divine sight of the Lord's heavenly form. (Chanda line no. 8)

दो०. वह सोभा समाज सुख कहत न बनइ खगेस ।
बरनहिं सारद सेष श्रुति सो रस जान महेस ॥ १२ (क) ॥
भिन्न भिन्न अस्तुति करि गए सुर निज निज धाम ।
बंदी बेष बेद तब आए जहँ श्रीराम ॥ १२ (ज) ॥
प्रभु सर्वग्य कीन्ह अति आदर कृपानिधान ।
लखेउ न काहूँ मरम कछु लगे करन गुन गान ॥ १२ (ग) ॥

dōhā.

vaha sōbhā samāja sukha kahata na bana'i khagēsa.
baranahim sārada sēṣa śruti sō rasa jāna mahēsa. 12 (a).
bhinna bhinna astuti kari ga'e sura nija nija dhāma.
bandī bēṣa bēda taba ā'e jaham' śrīrāma. 12 (b).
prabhu sarbagya kīnha ati ādara kṛpānidhāna.
lakhē'u na kāhūm' marama kachu lagē karana gāna. 12 (c).

[The saintly crow Kaagbhusund told Garud, his listener—]

‘Oh the king of birds (khagēsa)! The magnificence, the charm, the euphoria and the joy that prevailed and permeated everywhere at that time, was so stupendous and overriding that it defies all description.

Goddess Saraswati, Lord Sheshnath and the Vedas have made attempts to narrate and give a description of those eclectic moments as best as they could, but failed to do so as they could not completely comprehend the depth of its spiritual significance, for the spiritual bliss and ecstasy that it provided is known only to Lord Shiva¹. (Doha no. 12-a)

All the gods offered their prayers to Lord Ram, individually as well as in unison, and then went to their respective abodes in the heaven.

Then came the Vedas disguised as Bards or Minstrels at the place where Lord Ram was (i.e. at the venue of the coronation ceremony). (Doha no. 12-b)

Lord Ram, who is all-knowing and omniscient, immediately recognized them (that they were a personified form of the Vedas)²; so therefore the Lord welcomed them with great respect.

Everyone present there saw them (the Bards; the Minstrels), but none could recognize who they actually were (i.e. no one could understand that they were Vedas).

Meanwhile, these Bards or Minstrels sang the majestic glories of the Lord in laudatory terms. (Doha no. 12-c)

[Note—¹To wit, goddess Saraswati and Lord Sheshnath could only describe the physical beauty and grandeur of the occasion of Lord Ram’s coronation, but the real spiritual bliss and ecstasy that it provided could be realized and known only by Lord Shiva.

⁵An important question can be asked here. How many Bards or Minstrels had come to honour Lord Ram with their prayers? The answer is simple: they were five of them. Why? Because the Vedas are five in number as follows: Rig Veda, Shukla Yajur Veda, Krishna Yajur Veda, Sam Veda and Atharva Veda.]

{The following verses narrate the prayers offered by the Vedas in honour of Lord Ram.}

छं०. जय सगुन निर्गुन रूप रूप अनूप भूप सिरोमने । १ ।
दसकंधरादि प्रचंड निसिचर प्रबल खल भुज बल हने ॥ २ ॥
अवतार नर संसार भार बिभंजि दारुन दुख दहे । ३ ।
जय प्रनतपाल दयाल प्रभु संजुक्त सक्ति नमामहे ॥ ४ ॥

chanda.

jaya saguna nirguna rūpa rūpa anūpa bhūpa sirōmanē. 1.
dasakandharādi pracaṇḍa nisicara prabala khala bhuja bala hanē. 2.
avatāra nara sansāra bhāra bibhanji dārūna dukha dahē. 3.
jaya pranatapāla dayāla prabhu saṁjukta sakti namāmahē. 4.

The Vedas (appeared in a personified form before Lord Ram and) said: ‘Glory and Hail to the Lord (Sri Ram) who has both a ‘Saguna’ and a ‘Nirguna’ form¹. [That is, the Lord has a transcendental form that has both the characters of the cosmic Consciousness that has no particular form as it is all-pervading and all-encompassing, as well as of the Supreme Being who has taken a human form with specific characters and virtues.]

You have a form that is matchlessly beautiful and bewitchingly charming.

Oh Lord, you are the King of kings, and the most exalted amongst them. (1)

You have slayed, with the strength of your arms, Ravana and other demons who were most formidable, extremely terrible, very powerful and strong, and highly wicked and evil. (2)

Verily, oh Lord, you have manifested in the form of a human being to remove or eliminate the burden of the world (represented by these demons and the diabolical horrors they have been perpetrating for ages), and have literally reduced to ashes the hordes of sorrows and miseries that had been tormenting the world (due to the tyranny unleashed by these cruel demons)². (3)

Glory to you! I (the personified form of the Vedas) most reverentially bow before you along with your divine Shakti (dynamic cosmic powers that are represented by Sita, your wife, who, by the virtue of her association with you, has made you an embodiment of these cosmic dynamic powers). (4)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chanda line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 115 in the prayer of Lord Shiva.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 121 along with Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede it.]

तव बिषम माया बस सुरासुर नाग नर अग जग हरे । ५ ।
 भव पंथ भ्रमत अमित दिवस निसि काल कर्म गुननि भरे ॥ ६ ॥
 जे नाथ करि करुना बिलोके त्रिबिधि दुख ते निर्बहे । ७ ।
 भव खेद छेदन दच्छ हम कहूँ रच्छ राम नमामहे ॥ ८ ॥

tava biṣama māyā basa surāsura nāga nara aga jaga harē. 5.
 bhava pantha bhramata amita divasa nisi kāla karma gunani bharē. 6.
 jē nātha kari karunā bilōkē tribidhi dukha tē nirbahē. 7.
 bhava khēda chēdana daccha hama kahum³ raccha rāma namāmahē. 8.

Oh Hari (literally meaning the Lord who steals, removes or dispels all sorrows and grief, as well as their source; here meaning Lord Ram, and referring to Lord Vishnu as this word is one of his many divine names)! Under the spell of your formidable Maya (delusions) and overcome by its astounding strength and powers to subdue one and all, every entity in this creation, such as the gods, the demons, the Nagas (lords of the subterranean world) and the human beings, nay, not only them but all the rest of those who are animate as well as those who are inanimate in this world, are ensnared

by the factors of Kaal (time and death), Karma (deeds and their natural consequences that determine one's destiny) and Gunas¹ (qualities that decide a person's nature and temperament), and are driven by these drivers on the path that never seems to end, but keeps all the creatures trapped endlessly in the cycle of birth and death.

[The reason for this is that Maya, or delusion, has cast its snare over the entire creation which prevents anyone from realising the predicament he is in. The result is that all the creatures remain engrossed and indulgent in this world without bothering for liberation and deliverance, or even being aware of the fact that one is miserable and his misery is self-inflicted. Surely, if one would be freed from Maya, he would be freed from all the troubles and mischief caused by Maya. And how can this be achieved? It is possible only by the grace and blessings of Lord Ram. It is explained below—] (5-6)

In all sooth oh Lord, out of these creatures (who are bonded to this world under the spell of Maya), those upon whom you become benevolent and graceful, those upon whom you cast your merciful eyes of compassion and kindness, are the ones who are blessed with the boon of freedom from all the types of sorrows and miseries caused by the three drivers mentioned here (i.e. Kaal, Karma and Gunas)².

Oh Lord who is skilled in releasing one from the sufferings incumbent in the cycle of birth and death. Please grant us your protection; please save us³. We (the Vedas) reverentially bow before you. (7-8)

[Note—¹The Gunas are three in number, such as the Sata Guna, the Raja Guna and the Tama Guna. These are the basic qualities that every creature has in him. They determine his way of thinking and behaviour. An admixture of the above three Gunas, along with the other two factors such as (i) Kaal or the time and circumstances that influence a creature, and (ii) Karma or deeds that a creature does in his life, determine his destiny and fate. It is such a vicious cycle that it never stops or ends. This perpetually traps the creature in this world, and his soul never finds rest and peace. Then, what is the solution? The answer is simple: 'grace, blessing, benevolence and kindness of Lord Ram'. See note no. 2 below.

²In this context, refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 78—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 79; (ii) Doha no. 85 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it; (iii) Chaupai line no. 28 that precedes Doha no. 121—to Doha no. 122.

³Here, the Vedas are praying on behalf of the world and its creatures who are tormented by countless miseries, and from which they find it difficult to free themselves.]

जे ग्यान मान बिमत्त तव भव हरनि भक्ति न आदरी । १ ।

ते पाइ सुर दुर्लभ पदादपि परत हम देखत हरी ॥ १० ॥

बिस्वास करि सब आस परिहरि दास तव जे होइ रहे । ११ ।

जपि नाम तव बिनु श्रम तरहिं भव नाथ सो समरामहे ॥ १२ ॥

jē gyāna māna bimatta tava bhava harani bhakti na ādarī. 9.
 tē pā'i sura durlabha padādapi parata hama dēkhata harī. 10.
 bisvāsa kari saba āsa parihari dāsa tava jē hō'i rahē. 11.
 japi nāma tava binu śrama tarahim bhava nātha sō samarāmahē. 12.

Those who became falsely proud and haughty under the false impression that they are learned and wise (because they have studied the scriptures), and under their delusion and vanity had foolishly shown disrespect to or had discarded your devotion which is able to eliminate the fear of birth and death, oh Lord, we (the Vedas) have observed that such people have fallen from grace and become decimated inspite of having attained an exalted position in the rank and file of the society, and had achieved a stature that made them equivalent in honour and rank to Brahma (the creator) and other Gods¹. (9-10)

But when true wisdom and true knowledge dawns upon them, they realise their shortsightedness and folly, and then they abandon all other hopes and means (of attaining freedom from the cycle of birth and death and its accompanying horrors, of obtaining freedom from all sorrows incumbent with a mortal life in this gross, mundane and perishable world), and surrender before you to become your ardent devotee and follower.

They begin to rely solely upon repeating your holy name as a means to cross over this mundane world of transmigration very easily and effortlessly (instead of following so many difficult philosophies and paths for attaining the same destination as obtained simply by your devotion, such as the paths of doing 'Tapa' or severe penance and austerities, 'Yoga' or meditation, 'Dhyan' or contemplation, 'Yagya' or various religious sacrifices, 'Daan' or making charities and giving alms, and so on and so forth).

Verily indeed, it is for this reason we the Vedas so reverentially bow before you (Lord Ram) and invoke your blessings. (11-12)

[Note—¹Here the Vedas refer to those misguided people who say that they are learned and knowledgeable, that they know everything said in the scriptures about liberation and deliverance, such people have lost track of the reality in their vanity and arrogance of knowledge. They may acquire great respect, fame and honour in the world which looks upon them as its guide and teacher, being highly learned men of letters. These people call themselves Gurus, and gather a huge crowd of followers. In their false ego and self-proclaimed spiritual abilities, they declare themselves as super-humans and geniuses who know what is and how to attain freedom from the cycle of transmigration and the problems associated with it. The ignorant world begins to worship them as living gods or god-men; they are put on a pedestal equivalent to Brahma and the other Gods. But then what actually happens? Such pretenders not only sink their own boat but drag the entire fleet into drowning with them! They abandon the truthful path that provides liberation and deliverance to the creature, the path of 'devotion for Lord God' which is the path advised in the Vedas, because they think it is inconsequential and ineffective. Indeed, such misled people do not understand what true Gyan or enlightenment means; they have not understood the meaning and the intent of the Vedas. They do not understand that it is not the physical body of some prince known as Ram that is being honoured and praised by the Vedas, but it is the 'pure cosmic Consciousness' and the 'Supreme Being' in a manifested

pure form that is being advised to be followed and having devotion for when the scriptures refer to Lord Ram.]

जे चरन सिव अज पूज्य रज सुभ परसि मुनिपतिनी तरी । १३ ।
 नख निर्गता मुनि बंदिता त्रैलोक पावनि सुरसरी ॥ १४ ॥
 ध्वज कुलिस अंकुस कंज जुत बन फिरत कंटक किन लहे । १५ ।
 पद कंज द्वंद मुकुंद राम रमेस नित्य भजामहे ॥ १६ ॥

jē carana siva aja pūjya raja subha parasi munipatinī tarī. 13.
 nakha nirgatā muni banditā trailōka pāvani surasarī. 14.
 dhvaja kulisa aṅkusa kaṇṇa juta bana phirata kaṇṭaka kina lahē. 15.
 pada kaṇṇa dvanda mukunda rāma ramēsa nitya bhajāmahē. 16.

Your holy feet are revered and worshipped by the unborn Brahma (“aja”)¹; and even Lord Shiva (the two Gods of the Trinity)¹; the auspicious dust of your holy feet had liberated and redeemed the wife of sage Gautam (i.e. Ahilya from her curse that had made her into a stone, but she was freed from this curse when Lord Ram touched her with the dust of his feet)²,---[13]

---the stream of the holy river Ganges, known as ‘surasarī’ as it is the heavenly river (“sarī”) flowing in the heaven and adored by the Gods (“sura”), which is honoured even by the great sages and which purifies all the three divisions of the universe (i.e. the heaven, the earth and the nether world), has emerged from the nail of your holy feet³; ---[14]

---the holy feet the soles of which bear the auspicious signs of a flag, the thunderbolt, a goad and a lotus (the signs that are marked on the sole of Lord Vishnu’s divine feet) have been scarred by the thorns that pricked them as you walked barefoot on the path of the forest during your journey through it, ---[15]

---Oh Mukund (one who grants liberation), Oh Lord Ram, Oh Ramesh (the dear husband of goddess Rama or Laxmi)—we, the Vedas, worship and adore these two holy feet of yours with the greatest of reverence and devotion. [16] (13-16)

[Note—¹Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 146; (b) Uttar Kand, (ii) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 124.

Brahma, the creator, was the first to come into existence when the Viraat Purush, the cosmic form of the Supreme Being, decided to initiate the process of creation. Brahma was this Supreme Being’s first revelation with the express purpose of initiating the process of creation. He is said to ‘unborn’ as he did not take birth in the conventional way other living beings were created; there was no father from whom he was born—for he was a self-manifested form of the Viraat Purush. He is the most ancient of the Gods, and the eldest Being in creation; there is no forefather of Brahma. He derives his name from “Brahm”, the Supreme Being and the cosmic Consciousness that took a form known as Brahma as the first step towards the rolling forward the cycle of creation. Since he had no predecessor, he is called ‘Unborn’.

Lord Shiva is the third deity of the Trinity of Gods; he is the most enlightened amongst the gods, and the greatest devotee of Lord Ram. Lord Shiva worships Lord Ram and meditates on the latter at all times. This divine story of Ram Charit Manas

itself was conceived in Shiva's mind and bloomed like a lotus in the lake symbolised by his heart—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 19; (ii) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 30; (iii) Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 35; (iv) Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 82; (v) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 108.

²The story of Ahilya's liberation is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 210—to Doha no. 211.

It has been described in detail in Adhyatma Ramayan by sage Veda Vyas, in its Baal Kand, Canto no. 5, verse nos. 14—42.

³The story of river Ganges was described in brief to Lord Ram by sage Vishwamitra in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 212.

It has been described in detail in: (i) The story of the origin of the holy river Ganges is narrated in Srimad Bhagwat Mahapurāṇ, Skandha 5, Canto 17, verse nos. 1-10; and (ii) Valmiki's Ramayan, Baal Kand, Sarga 38—44.]

अव्यक्तमूलमनादि तरु त्वच चारि निगमागम भने । १७ ।

षट् कंध साखा पंच बीस अनेक पर्न सुमन घने ॥ १८ ॥

फल जुगल बिधि कटु मधुर बेलि अकेलि जेहि आश्रित रहे । १९ ।

पल्लवत फूलत नवल नित संसार बिटप नमामहे ॥ २० ॥

abyaktamūlamanādi taru tvaca cāri nigamāgama bhanē. 17.

ṣaṭa kandha sākḥā pañca bīsa anēka parna sumana ghanē. 18.

phala jugala bidhi kaṭu madhura bēli akēli jēhi āśrita rahē. 19.

pallavata phūlata navala nita sansāra biṭapa namāmahē. 20.

[These verses describe the cosmic form of Lord Ram as the Viraat Purush or the Supreme Being¹. It is envisioned here that the Lord is like a huge Tree from which the creation has emerged.]

Oh Lord! You are 'Abyakta' (one who is so subtle and sublime that he cannot be described and seen; one who is not revealed but permeates and pervades through out the creation in an invisible form; one who is invisible yet whose presence and existence are irrefutable); you are 'Mūla' or the essence and root of this creation and everything that exists in it (i.e. the entire gamut of creation has its origin in you); you are 'Anādi' or one who has no end or beginning, and you are the 'Mūlamanā' or the primary form of the cosmic mind represented by the original Nature known as the Prakriti from which the rest of everything in existence emerged. [In other words, the Lord is the "root" of the primary cosmic Tree. This Tree has been in existence since time immemorial, and no one knows about its roots which pre-existed the time itself.]

The Vedas (ancient scriptures) and the Agamas (the Tantras) affirm that this huge cosmic Tree has four layers of bark (taru tvaca cāri). [These symbolise the four states of existence of consciousness in this creation: viz. (i) the waking state known as the Jagrat, (ii) the dreaming state known as the Swapna, (iii) the deep sleep state known as the Sushupta, (iv) and the transcendental state of pure consciousness known as the 'self' or the Turiya.] (17)

It has six stems (**ṣaṭa kandha**). [These are the six forms in which the creation exists: viz. (i) to be known as ‘Asti’, (ii) to come into existence known as ‘Jaayate’, (iii) to undergo transformation and change of form known as ‘Viparinamate’, (iv) to grow and develop known as ‘Vardhate’, (v) to decay known as ‘Kshiyate’, and (vi) to perish known as ‘Kshiyate’.]

It has twenty-five branches (**sākhā pañca bīsa**). [These are the following: Prakriti or primary Nature + Mahat or the cosmic intellect and reason + Ahankar or the cosmic senses of ego and pride + Mana or the cosmic mind + Chitta or the cosmic sub-conscious aspect of the mind and intellect + the five cosmic organs of perception such as hearing, seeing, feeling, smelling and tasting + the five cosmic aspects of perception such as to hear, to see, to feel, to smell and to taste that are collectively called the Tanmatras or subtle elements + the five principal elements that together make the building blocks of this gross creation, called Panch-Mahabhuts, such as the sky, air, fire, water and earth = twenty-five basic aspects of creation which were revealed from the root of this cosmic Tree.]

This Tree has countless leaves and beautiful flowers of all hues (**anēka parna sumana ghanē**). [These refer to the myriad forms with countless variations in which this colourful creation exists. It also means that the countless desires that exist in this creation are the many leaves of this gigantic Tree of creation, and the equally countless ways and means adopted to fulfill these desires are the flowers because these ways and means result in reaching the goal because these ‘flowers’ represent the visible reward of all successful the efforts made to fulfill one’s desires.] (18)

This Tree bears two types of fruits—ones that are sweet, and others that are bitter (**phala jugala bidhi kaṭu madhura**). [These two types of fruits symbolise either a happy or an unhappy experience that a person has in this world; they represent success and failure in this world. Some of the efforts to fulfill one’s desires yield happy results, and others make a person feel bitter and sad. Thus, the sense of pleasure and joy on the one hand, and sorrows and pain on the other hand are the two types of sweet and bitter fruits respectively found on this Tree.]

The Tree has a creeper that is entwined around it and finds its support in this Tree (**bēli akēli jēhi āśrita rahē**). [This creeper that clings to this Tree is the ‘Maya’ or the delusions that firmly grasps everything in this creation in its tentacles just like a creeper that firmly holds on to a tree and thrives on it.] (19)

This ‘creeper’ thrives and draws its nourishment from this cosmic Tree, and it gives out newer leaves and flowers of its own every now and then in a perpetual manner (**pallavata phūlata navala nita**). [That is, Maya creates its own set of desires and yearnings, and impels the creature to make efforts to fulfill them.]

Oh Lord! We most reverentially bow before this cosmic form of yours which is like a huge Cosmic Tree of the Universe from which everything that exists has emerged and upon which the entire universe rests (**sansāra biṭapa namāmahē**). (20)

[Note—¹The cosmic form of Lord Ram has been described by (a) Mandodari in Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Doha no. 14—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 15; and (b) by Kaagbhushund in Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 80—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 82.]

जे ब्रह्म अजमद्वैतमनुभवगज्ज मनपर ध्यावहीं । २१ ।
 ते कहहुँ जानहुँ नाथ हम तव सगुन जस नित गावहीं ॥ २२ ॥
 करुनायतन प्रभु सदगुनाकर देव यह बर मागहीं । २३ ।
 मन बचन कर्म बिकार तजि तव चरन हम अनुरागहीं ॥ २४ ॥

jē brahma ajamadvaitamanubhavagamyā manapara dhyāvahīm. 21.
 tē kahahum̐ jānahum̐ nātha hama tava saguna jasa nita gāvahīm. 22.
 karunāyatana prabhu sadagunākara dēva yaha bara māgahīm. 23.
 mana bacana karma bikāra taji tava carana hama anurāgahīm. 24.

That Brahm who is without a birth (aja), who is non-dual and one of his kind (advaita), who is known or realised only through experience (and not through scholarship of the scriptures; ‘anubhavagamyā’), and who is beyond the reach of the Mana (mind and its intellectual and reasoning faculties; ‘manapara’)—verily, there are some wise ones who contemplate and meditate upon Brahm with this eclectic knowledge and holistic view (dhyāvahīm)¹. (21)

Well, let them say so and know you in the way that pleases them, but as far as we (the Vedas) are concerned, oh Lord, we prefer always to adore and worship you and sing your Saguna or manifested form which we behold before us right now. (22)

Oh Lord who are an abode and an embodiment of mercy, compassion and kindness (karunāyatana prabhu)! Oh Lord who is a mine of excellent virtues and glorious characters (sadagunākara dēva)! We ask for this boon that we may have everlasting devotion and affection in your holy feet (tava carana hama anurāgahīm) after having abandoned all faults and negativities from our mind, heart, speech and actions (mana bacana karma bikāra taji). [That is, please bless us that we can worship and adore you with a clean and purified mind and heart, that our actions and deeds and words become auspicious so much so that they not only make us eligible for your worship but help us in doing so, because otherwise they would create unwarranted obstacles in our path and pull the rug from under our feet.] (23-24)’

[Note—¹Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, (i) Chanda line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 51; (ii) Chanda line nos. 5-9 that precede Doha no. 186; (iii) (b) Ayodhya Kand, (iii) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 126—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 127; (c) Kishkindha Kand, (iv) Doha no. 26; (d) Uttar Kand, (v) Doha no. 47; (vi) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 48; (vii) Doha no. 85-a.]

दो०. सब के देखत बेदन्ह बिनती कीन्ह उदार ।
 अंतर्धान भए पुनि गए ब्रह्म आगार ॥ १३ (क) ॥

dōhā.

saba kē dēkhata bēdanha binatī kīnhi udāra.
 antardhāna bha'e puni ga'e brahma āgāra. 13 (a).

The Vedas offered their prayers to Lord Ram as narrated herein above, and then went to the abode of Brahma, the creator, located in the upper levels of the heaven¹. (Doha no. 13-a)

[Note—¹It ought to be noted here that Brahma is the creator of the Vedas, the primary scriptures and a repository of all knowledge that exists in this creation. So, after praying to Lord Ram, they returned to their patron deity Brahma in whose custody the Vedas are kept as a safe sanctuary for them and where their purity can be maintained. It is akin to keeping good books in the safe custody of a wise and resourceful librarian who would go to any extent to protect and preserve these books as his most treasured wealth.]

बैनतेय सुनु संभु तब आए जहँ रघुबीर ।
बिनय करत गदगद गिरा पूरित पुलक सरिर ॥ १३ (ख) ॥

bainatēya sunu sambhu taba ā'ē jaham̐ raghubīra.
binaya karata gadagada girā pūrīta pulaka sarīra. 13 (b).

[The saintly crow Kaagbhusund, who is one of the primary narrators of this holy book 'Ram Charit Manas', then told his listener Garud, the son of Vinta, the mother of birds (bainatēya), as follows—] 'Listen Garud! Then (after the Vedas had gone away), Lord Shiva came where Lord Ram (the brave Lord of the race of kings descending from the ancient king name Raghu of Ayodhya; "raghubīra") was seated on his throne (at the time of his coronation).

Lord Shiva offered his prayers to Lord Ram¹ with a voice choked with emotions and his body thrilled so much that his hairs stood on their ends. (Doha no. 13-b)

[Note—¹We must remember that Lord Shiva had promised Lord Ram on the battle-field of Lanka, after the war had ended and the Lord was victorious, that he would come to Ayodhya to attend the coronation ceremony of the Lord—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Doha no. 115.

Hence, Lord Shiva arrives now to fulfill his promise.]

छं०. जय राम रमारमनं समनं । भव ताप भयाकुल पाहि जनं ॥ १ ॥
अवधेस सुरेस रमेस बिभो । सरनागत मागत पाहि प्रभो ॥ २ ॥
chanda.

jaya rāma ramāramanaṁ samanaṁ. bhava tāpa bhayākula pāhi janam̐. 1.
avadhēsa surēsa ramēsa bibhō. saraṇāgata māgata pāhi prabhō. 2.

'Glory and Hail to Lord Ram who is dear to goddess Rama (Laxmi), and who destroys all fears arising out of this world of transmigration and its accompanying horrors that torments his devotees! Oh Lord, save this humble servant (i.e. devotee and follower) of yours who is agitated exceedingly due to the horrors of the endless cycle of birth and death in this world. (1)

Oh Lord of Ayodhya! Oh Lord of the Gods! Oh Lord of Rama (goddess Laxmi)! Oh Vibho (the Lord who is all-mighty, all-pervading, all-encompassing, omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent, and who is the undisputable Lord God of this world)! This humble one who has taken refuge with you ask for only one blessing and boon—which is that you grant your unconditional and unwavering protection to me. (2)

दससीस बिनासन बीस भुजा । कृत दूरि महा महि भूरि रुजा ॥ ३ ॥
रजनीचर बृंद पतंग रहे । सर पावक तेज प्रचंड दहे ॥ ४ ॥

dasasīsa bināsana bīsa bhujā. kṛta dūri mahā mahi bhūri rujā. 3.
rajanīcara br̥nda pataṅga rahē. sara pāvaka tēja pracaṇḍa dahē. 4.

Oh Lord (Sri Ram) who has slayed the ten-headed and twenty-armed demon (Ravana, the king of Lanka), and has thereby freed the whole earth from the huge, interminable and horrifying torments and sorrows from which it was suffering due to this evil rascal¹. (3)

All the demons, who were like insects, got scorched in the fire represented by your fierce arrows. (4)

[Note—¹The sort of horrors and cruelty that the demons had unleashed on the earth has been described in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 179—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 184.]

महि मंडल मंडन चारुतरं । धृत सायक चाप निषंग बरं ॥ ५ ॥
मद मोह महा ममता रजनी । तम पुंज दिवाकर तेज अनी ॥ ६ ॥

mahi maṇḍala maṇḍana cārutaram. dhṛta sāyaka cāpa niṣaṅga baram. 5.
mada mōha mahā mamatā rajanī. tama puṅja divākara tēja anī. 6.

Oh Lord! You are like the best and awesome ornamentation of this creation (i.e. it is you who gives this creation its charm and attractiveness for which it is so famous; the creation would lose its meaning and substance without you because you are the soul of this creation; nothing and no one is better than you).

Your beauteous form holds a bow, an arrow and a quiver. (5)

For the purpose of destroying (vanquishing; eliminating) the dark foreboding night symbolized by the negative qualities of ‘Mada’ (vanity, false pride, ego, haughtiness, arrogance, hypocrisy), ‘Moha’ and ‘Mamta’ (attractions, infatuations, attachments with the world and its sense objects), you are like the brilliant light of the sun.

[Just as the sun-light immediately removes all darkness, your mere presence is sufficient to get rid of these dark traits in a creature.] (6)

मनजात किरात निपात किए । मृग लोग कुभोग सरेन हिए ॥ ७ ॥

हति नाथ अनाथनि पाहि हरे । बिषया बन पावँ भूलि परे ॥ ८ ॥

manajāta kirāta nipāta ki'ē. mrga lōga kubhōga sarēna hi'ē. 7.
hati nātha anāthani pāhi harē. biṣayā bana pāvamṛa bhūli parē. 8.

The hunter represented by 'Kaam' (lust and passions) have killed (conquered and subdued) the deer representing all the creatures of this world by hitting it with an arrow symbolized by 'Bhog' (desire for gratification of the sense organs; the desire to enjoy the world of material things). (7)

Oh Lord! Oh Hari (one who removes all sorts of negativity and misery)! Kill that hunter ('Kaam') and save the foolish and vile creatures of this world who are tormented by him.

[The creatures are deemed to be 'foolish' because they allow themselves to be trapped in the snare laid by worldly delusions, and they are 'vile' because they commit so many grave sins that their redemption is only possible by the intervention of the Lord.] (8)

बहु रोग बियोगन्हि लोग हए । भवदंघ्रि निरादर के फल ए ॥ ९ ॥
भव सिंधु अगाध परे नर ते । पद पंकज प्रेम न जे करते ॥ १० ॥

bahu rōga biyōganhi lōga ha'ē. bhavadaṅghri nirādara kē phala ē. 9.
bhava sindhu agādha parē nara tē. pada paṅkaja prēma na jē karatē. 10.

The people are tormented by countless moral diseases as well as misery and grief that are caused by separation (here meaning 'death' because it causes separation not only from one's dear ones but also from the world which the 'foolish and vile' creature thinks belongs to him, and to which it clings greedily). All this is due to the insult caused by them to your holy feet—that is, it is due to the fact that the creatures have turned away from you and your devotion, and instead have got indulgent in the affairs of the perishable, mortal and mundane world of sense objects, something that cannot give them peace and happiness even in their imagination, but only causes sufferings and grief. (9)

Verily indeed and in all sooth, those who have no devotion for your holy feet fall into an ocean represented by this deluding world consisting of an endless cycle of miseries and grief as well as birth and death (10)

अति दीन मलीन दुखी नितहीं । जिन्ह के पद पंकज प्रीति नहीं ॥ ११ ॥
अवलंब भवंत कथा जिन्ह के । प्रिय संत अनंत सदा तिन्ह के ॥ १२ ॥

ati dīna malīna dukhī nitahīm. jinha kēm pada paṅkaja prīti nahīm. 11.
avalamba bhavanta kathā jinha kēm. priya santa ananta sadā tinha kēm. 12.

Truly, those who have no devotion in your holy feet, are subjected to regular agony, are extremely unfortunate, and are endlessly sad and sorrowful. (11)

On the other hand, those who find your divine stories interesting and rely upon them to derive happiness, joy, peace and bliss find solace in the company of saints and righteous people (because here they can hear about you and your divine stories instead of worldly talks). (12)

[To wit, foolish people find a sense of false joy in the company of worldly people where things are talked about concerning the world which is a treasury of sorrows and grief. But in their ignorance such people do not realise that they are only wasting their time in illusionary happiness that is superficial and short-lived. On the other hand, those who are wise and enlightened spend their time in the company of saintly people where your divine stories and all matters pertaining to the elevation of the soul are discussed and talked about. It is an old adage that “a man becomes like the company one keeps”; so how can the former expect to get eternal spiritual peace in the wrong company?

नहिं राग न लोभ न मान मदा । तिन्ह कें सम बैभव वा बिपदा ॥ १३ ॥

एहि ते तव सेवक होत मुदा । मुनि त्यागत जोग भरोस सदा ॥ १४ ॥

nahim rāga na lōbha na māna madā. tinha kēm sama baibhava vā bipadā. 13.
ēhi tē tava sēvaka hōta mudā. muni tyāgata jōga bharōsa sadā. 14.

Such people (who keep good company and have devotion for you, those who have surrendered themselves at your holy feet and adore you) have no negativities as ‘Raag’ (attachments, infatuations), ‘Lobha’ (greed, avarice, rapacity), ‘Maan’ (false pride, ego, vanity), and ‘Mada’ (arrogance, haughtiness) in them. They treat good fortunes and misfortunes equally (i.e. they have developed, nurtured and inculcated the grand virtue of equanimity, neutrality and dispassion in them). (13)

Wise sages prefer to have devotion and affection for you instead of pursuing Yoga (meditation) to attain their spiritual goals (because the path of ‘Bhakti’ or devotion is far easier and convenient as compared to the path of Yoga)¹. (14)

[Note—¹Even the Vedas has affirmed this fact in their prayer in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chanda line nos. 9-12 that precede Doha no. 13.]

करि प्रेम निरंतर नेम लिएँ । पद पंकज सेवत सुद्ध हिएँ ॥ १५ ॥

सम मानि निरादर आदरही । सब संत सुखी बिचरंति मही ॥ १६ ॥

kari prēma nirantara nēma li'ēm. pada paṅkaja sēvata sud'dha hi'ēm. 15.
sama māni nirādara ādarahī. saba santa sukhī bicaranti mahī. 16.

Such saintly people develop deep devotion and intense affection for you, and serve your holy feet and remember you constantly, always repeating you holy name with a

pure and clean heart (which is uncorrupt, unpretentious, are free of delusions, free from all conceit and deceit). (15)

They treat insult and praise equally, with stoic indifference, and thereby roam on this earth peacefully and cheerfully (without feeling hurt and emotionally upset by such insults and harsh words uttered against them—for they leave it upon you to punish their tormentors, and also because they know that such people are fools of the highest order who are best neglected and left aside). (16)

मुनि मानस पंकज भृंग भजे । रघुबीर महा रनधीर अजे ॥ १७ ॥
तव नाम जपामि नमामि हरी । भव रोग महागद मान अरी ॥ १८ ॥

muni mānasa paṅkaja bhr̥ṅga bhajē. raghubīra mahā ranadhīra ajē. 17.
tava nāma japāmi namāmi harī. bhava rōga mahāgada māna arī. 18.

Oh Lord Raghubir (the brave Lord of the Raghu Race), and one who is invincible! Great sages and pious souls constantly worship you and remain ever submerged in your thoughts in their hearts just like the black-bee that hums and buzzes cheerfully over the open petals of the lotus flower, oblivious of all other things.

[The black-bee is so enamoured of the lotus flower that when it hovers over it, it forgets about its surroundings and even about its own self. Its entire being and attention is concentrated and focused on the lotus flower. Likewise, sages and pious souls find immense bliss and joy in remaining focused on the holy feet of Lord Ram so much so that their heart thinks of nothing else.] (17)

Oh Lord Hari, I worship and adore you most reverentially, and I always repeat your holy and divine name. I most respectfully bow before you.

Verily, you are a great remedy for the disease represented by the sufferings associated with birth and death (i.e. transmigration), and you are an enemy of Ahankar (false sense of pride, ego and vanity).

[To wit, Lord Ram helps the creature to free himself from the clutches of the cycle of birth and death in this mortal world by helping his soul to find liberation and deliverance. The Lord does not allow his devotees to suffer from the ill-effects of pride and ego.] (18)

गुन सील कृपा परमायतनं । प्रनमामि निरंतर श्रीरमनं ॥ १९ ॥
रघुनंद निकंदय द्वंद्वघनं । महिपाल बिलोकय दीनजनं ॥ २० ॥

guna sīla kṛpā paramāyatanam. pranamāmi nirantara śrīramanam. 19.
raghunanda nikandaya dvandvaghanam. mahipāla bilōkaya dīnajanam. 20.

Oh Lord! You are a sovereign abode of the grandest and the best of virtues and excellent qualities in creation; you are an embodiment of goodness, graciousness, courteousness and amiability; you are a fount of mercy, compassion and kindness!

Oh Lord who is dear to Rama (goddess Laxmi)! I always bow most reverentially before you; I always greet you most warmly. (19)

Oh Lord Raghunandan (the Lord who is the descendent of the Race of king Raghu of Ayodhya)! You are the one who dispels all the confusions and dilemmas arising out of numerous contradictions and paradoxes in this world (nikandaya dvandvaghanam).

Oh Lord who are the protector and sustainer of this earth (mahipāla)! Please be kind to cast your gracious and benevolent glance upon this humble servant (devotee and follower) of yours too. (20)

दो०. बार बार बार मागउँ हरषि देहु श्रीरंग ।

पद सरोज अनपायनी भगति सदा सतसंग ॥ १४ (क) ॥

dōhā.

bāra bāra bara māga'um̐ haraṣi dēhu śrīraṅga.

pada sarōja anapāyanī bhagati sadā satasaṅga. 14 (a).

Lord Shiva concluded his prayers by asking Lord Ram to grant him the following boon: 'Oh Lord of Laxmi (śrīraṅga)! I repeatedly beg of you to grant me a boon that I shall have abiding, eternal and an un-diminishing devotion and affection for thine holy lotus-like feet, as well as the opportunity to have constant interaction and communion with saintly, holy and pious souls who are thy devotees.'² (Doha no. 14-a)

[Note—¹It must be remembered that Lord Ram is a manifestation of Lord Vishnu who is the husband of goddess Laxmi, the patron deity of prosperity, wealth and material well-being. In Vishnu's incarnation as Lord Ram, Laxmi became Sita, the divine consort of Lord Ram.

²In this context, refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Ayodhya Kand, (i) Doha no. 128 along with Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede it; (ii) Doha no. 129 along with Chaupai line nos. 4-6 that precede it; (iii) Doha no. 131 along with Chaupai line nos. 4, 8 that precede it; (b) Uttar Kand, (iv) Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 45; (v) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 54; (vi) Chaupai line nos. 4-7 that precedes Doha no. 61; (vii) Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 88; (viii) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 123.]

बरनि उमापति राम गुन हरषि गए कैलास ।

तब प्रभु कपिन्ह दिवाए सब बिधि सुखप्रद बास ॥ १४ (ख) ॥

barani umāpati rāma guna haraṣi ga'ē kailāsa.

taba prabhu kapinha divā'ē saba bidhi sukhaprada bāsa. 14 (b).

After praising Lord Ram's excellent virtues, majesty and glories (as enumerated in the foregoing verses), Lord Shiva, the Lord of Uma (umāpati), went back to his abode at Mt. Kailash.

Then, Lord Ram instructed his royal attendants that the Kapis (i.e. his monkey friends who had accompanied him aboard the Pushpak plane from Lanka)¹ be given lodgings that were comfortable and enjoyable in all respects, and accommodated in guest houses that were complete with all amenities and material comforts (*saba bidhi sukhaprada bāsa*). (Doha no. 14-b)

[Note—¹We have already read that at the time Lord Ram had boarded the Pushpak plane to fly back home, some of his close aides had also boarded the plane—some of the names mentioned are Sugriv (the chief of the monkey kingdom), Neela, Jamvant (the chief of the bear community), Angad (the crown prince of Kishkindha), Nala, Hanuman, and Vibhishan, together with other chieftains and commanders who had lent support to Lord Ram and had come very close to him during the campaign of Lanka—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Doha no. 117-b.

Further, so as not to arouse any unwarranted curiosity and alarm in Ayodhya, all his companions had assumed ‘human forms’ when the plane landed in the city. This is clearly stated in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 8.

On the way to Ayodhya, Lord Ram had met Nishad and invited him too to join the party on board the airplane, and therefore Nishad was also one of the guests who were given royal treatment, as would be evident from the following verses—Ram Charit Manas, (a) Lanka Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 12 and Chanda line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 121; (b) Uttar Kand, (ii) Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 20.

Now therefore, it naturally follows that it were not only the monkey warriors who were given a royal treatment and proper accommodation in Ayodhya as royal guests of Lord Ram as the use of the word “kapi” in the text might suggest, but that everyone else too were extended the same hospitality as them. Obviously, Lord Ram would not be so rude, impolite, ill-mannered, uncivilised and un-courteous as to neglect his other friends, for all were equally dear and near to him, and all had equally helped the Lord during his time of distress, grief and adversity, and contributed their might to support him to defeat the cruel demons and free the world from their scourge.]

चौ०. सुनु खगपति यह कथा पावनी । त्रिबिध ताप भव भय दावनी ॥ १ ॥

महाराज कर सुभ अभिषेका । सुनत लहहिं नर बिरति बिबेका ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

sunu khagapati yaha kathā pāvanī. tribidha tāpa bhava bhaya dāvanī. 1.

mahārāja kara subha abhiṣēkā. sunata lahaḥiṁ nara birati bibēkā. 2.

[Continuing with the narration, the saintly crow Kaagbhusund told his listener Garud, the king of birds, as follows—]

‘Listen oh king of birds (sunu khagapati)¹. This divine Story (of Lord Ram) is very purifying, holy and auspicious (kathā pāvanī). It has the potential to eliminate all the torments associated with this mundane gross world as well as the three great fears associated with it (tribidha tāpa bhava bhaya dāvanī)². (1)

When a person listens to the episode that describes the coronation of Lord Ram, he or she is freed from all such fears and apprehensions³. Such persons get true wisdom and develop renunciation⁴. (2)

[Note—¹The reader must have noticed by now that there are two primary narrators and two primary listeners of this glorious Story. One such narrator and listener is Lord Shiva and his consort Parvati, who is also known by the name of Uma; and the other narrator and listener are the saintly crow Kaagbhusund and Garud, the mount of Lord Vishnu, respectively.

Presently, it is the latter two who are being cited in this verse. The episode that describes the conversation betwixt Kaagbhusund and Garud, wherein the Story of the Ramayana was narrated, is to be found in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 63—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 68.

²The three great fears associated with this mundane world of transmigration, fears that cause misery to all living beings, are the following: Adhibhautik = fears and problems related to the physical world and its creatures; Adhidaivik = fears and problems created by adverse gods and malignant stars; and Adhyamik = fears related to one's spiritual well-being.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 32.

³When the king of a kingdom is benevolent, kind and merciful, if he is concerned about the welfare of his subjects and ensures that no one in his realm suffers unnecessarily, when the king is known for his gracious and compassionate nature, it is sure then that the people within his domain live a happy and contented life.

This analogy is used here to mean that when the devotee sees Lord Ram as his Lord and Protector, there would be nothing from which he or she would be worried in this world. Lord Ram's coronation as the Sovereign implies that the devotee has a friend in power and authority; a friend who would go out of his way and employ his abilities and resources to ensure that all his other friends are happy and contented, that no one troubles them. So this means that the people of the world can live happily when they put themselves in the safe custody of Lord Ram.

Remember: We are not talking about some great worldly prince or king of any worldly kingdom, but of the Supreme Lord of the world, of the Lord God. Hence, if one relies on the Lord Ram with the firm conviction and faith that he is none but the Supreme Being himself, the Lord God himself, then say what fear can he or she ever have?

⁴With the firm faith that Lord Ram is ready to take care of all the needs in one's life, both worldly as well as spiritual, what is the necessity and the purpose served by hankering after worldly acquisitions or trying to appease gods and stars? With this realization comes renunciation, and this is true spiritual wisdom.]

जे सकाम नर सुनहिं जे गावहिं । सुख संपति नाना बिधि पावहिं ॥ ३ ॥
सुर दुर्लभ सुख करि जग माहीं । अंतकाल रघुपति पुर जाहीं ॥ ४ ॥

jē sakāma nara sunahim jē gāvahim. sukha sampati nānā bidhi pāvahim. 3.
sura durlabha sukha kari jaga māmhim. antakāla raghupati pura jāhim. 4.

Those who hear and sing or recite this divine Story with some desire in mind, they are blessed with all sorts and different types of happiness and prosperity. [To wit, all their worldly desires are taken care of.] (3)

While alive they live a life of heavenly comfort and happiness that is envy of the gods. And when they die, they attain deliverance and their soul attains the heavenly abode of Lord Raghupati himself. [To wit, upon death, such persons go to heaven.] (4)

[Note—These two verses elaborate on what has been said previously. By relying upon Lord Ram, one is able to live happily in this world, and upon death one goes to heaven. To wit, all worldly as well as spiritual well-being and welfare are taken care of simultaneously.]

सुनहिं बिमुक्त बिरत अरु बिषई । लहहिं भगति गति संपति नई ॥ ५ ॥
खगपति राम कथा मैं बरनी । स्वमति बिलास त्रास दुख हरनी ॥ ६ ॥
बिरति बिबेक भगति दूढ़ करनी । मोह नदी कहँ सुंदर तरनी ॥ ७ ॥

sunahim bimukta birata aru biṣa'ī. lahaḥim bhagati gati sampati na'ī. 5.
khagapati rāma kathā maim baranī. svamati bilāsa trāsa dukha haranī. 6.
birati bibēka bhagati dūrha karanī. mōha nadī kham' sundara taranī. 7.

Hearing of this glorious Story grants desired fruits to the listener depending on his attitude, aptitude, subtle inclinations, and mental bearing.

Verily, if this divine Story is heard by those who free from all worldly attachments as well as by those who practice renunciation and dispassion, they are blessed with the fruit of Bhakti (i.e. devotion for Lord God) and Gati (i.e. they find salvation; their souls find deliverance and emancipation).

On the other hand, if it is heard by those who are enamoured by the world and its material things, then they too find their wishes fulfilled by getting newer successes and gains in this material world. (5)

Oh king of birds (khagapati)! I have narrated the divine and glorious Story of Ram (rāma kathā) in accordance with my understanding and knowledge¹. It not only gives immense comfort but also eliminates all torments and tribulations associated with life in this mortal and gross world. (6)

This blessed Story reinforces the virtues of renunciation, detachment and dispassion that a person has in his heart; it further fortifies wisdom and judicious thinking; and it firms up the virtues of devotion and submission to the Lord God that is already present in the heart of a devotee. Forsooth, these grand qualities are made more robust and abiding if a person hears this Story attentively, and with immense faith (as to its mystical powers to grant spiritual rewards as well as fulfillment of wishes).

Verily indeed and without gainsay, this Story of Lord Ram is like a wonderful boat (*sundara taranī*) that can help a person to easily cross the river of Maya (i.e. the river symbolized by delusions and all its associated problems) without any hassles. (7)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 64—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 68.]

नित नव मंगल कौसलपुरी । हरषित रहहि लोग सब कुरी ॥ ८ ॥
नित नइ प्रीति राम पद पंकज । सब कें जिन्हहि नमत सिव मुनि अज ॥ ९ ॥
मंगन बहु प्रकार पहिराए । द्विजन्ह दान नाना बिधि पाए ॥ १० ॥

nita nava maṅgala kausalapurī. haraṣita rahahim lōga saba kurī. 8.
nita na'i prīti rāma pada paṅkaja. saba kēm jinhahi namata siva muni aja. 9.
maṅgana bahu prakāra pahirā'ē. dvijanha dāna nānā bidhi pā'ē. 10.

Meanwhile, there were daily festivities and many kinds of celebrations in Ayodhya (to mark the coronation of Lord Ram, as well as to mark his return from the forest and the success in the epic War of Lanka).

Everyone in the realm, of all castes and denominations, was very happy and exhilarated. (8)

Everyone had great affection and reverence for the lotus-like feet of Lord Ram; everyone adored and paid obeisance to the holy feet of the Lord before which even Lord Shiva, the great sages, as well as the creator Brahma bow their heads. (9)

Alms seekers received liberal gifts of different kinds; Brahmins too received grants and largesse of various sorts. (10)

दो०. ब्रह्मानंद मगन कपि सब कें प्रभु पद प्रीति ।
जात न जाने दिवस तिन्ह गए मास षट बीति ॥ १५ ॥

dōhā.

brahmānanda magana kapi saba kēm prabhu pada prīti.
jāta na jānē divasa tinha ga'ē māsa ṣaṭa bīti. 15.

All the Kapis (i.e. the monkeys as well as the bears who had come with Lord Ram aboard the plane from the battle-field of Lanka, as his guests and friends) were so much charmed, so enthralled and so captivated by the mass celebrations and extended festivities that marked Lord Ram's return to Ayodhya and his coronation that they virtually lost track of time and forgot who they were—so much so that almost six months passed without them knowing how long it was¹. (Doha no. 15)

[Note—¹It ought to be noted here that when Lord Ram and his brothers were born, a similar thing had happened at that time too—one month passed in festivities and celebrations without anyone realizing how long it had been. Refer: Ram Charit

Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 195 along with Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes it, and Chaupai line no. 1 that follows it.]

{As we have read in the foregoing verses, after the Lord's coronation festivities were over, his honoured guests from Kishkindha and Lanka, i.e. the chiefs of the monkey and bear race, as well as Vibhishan and his companions, as well as Nishad of the boatman community, who had come to Ayodhya on the Pushpak plane, were treated as royal guests of Lord Ram. They enjoyed the Lord's loving company and warm hospitality for six months. But as all good things come to an end one day, just like misfortunes and bad times too end one day, a day arrived after six months when Lord Ram had to ask his friends to return to their respective homes. After all, they could not remain forever in Ayodhya, and had to return home to attend to their duties and responsibilities there. When they were informed of the Lord's request, all of them fell extremely sad, for none wanted to part company with their beloved Lord, especially when they were shown so much of exceptional warmth and hospitality by the gracious Lord. But one had to be practical in this world, and so they finally agreed, with a very heavy heart, to the Lord's request.

Lord Ram gave them a warm send-off, giving each of them personal gifts and memorabilia. Then they returned to their homes full of praises for the Lord, with happy memories of their companionship with Lord Ram forever enshrined in their hearts. We shall read in the verses that follow herein below that Angad had been most reluctant to go back, and Lord Ram was very emotionally disturbed when reluctantly he had to send Angad back under compulsions of circumstances. Only Hanuman remained in the service of the Lord.}

चौ०. बिसरे गृह सपनेहुँ सुधि नाहीं । जिमि परद्रोह संत मन माहीं ॥ १ ॥
तब रघुपति सब सखा बोलाए । आइ सबन्हि सादर सिरु नाए ॥ २ ॥
परम प्रीति समीप बैठारे । भगत सुखद मृदु बचन उचारे ॥ ३ ॥

caupāī.

bisarē gr̥ha sapanēhum' sudhi nāhīm. jimi paradrōha santa mana māhīm. 1.
taba raghupati saba sakhā bōlā'ē. ā'i sabanhi sādara siru nā'ē. 2.
parama prīti samīpa baiṭhārē. bhagata sukhada mṛdu bacana ucārē. 3.

All of them (i.e. the 'Kapis') forgot everything about their own homes so much so that they didn't even dream of either their own families back home or about returning back—in the same way as saints do not harbour in their hearts and minds any kind of ill-will or animosity towards their adversaries, nor do they remember any harm or offence anyone has done to them. (1)

By-and-by, one day Lord Ram called all his friends for a meeting. All came and bowed their heads reverentially before the Lord. (2)

He made them sit down close to him most affectionately.

Once they were all seated around him, the Lord spoke very polite words that would be pleasant for his devotees to hear¹. (3)

[Note—¹The Kapis were so loyal and faithful to Lord Ram that besides being the Lord's close friends and companions they were also his 'devotees'. That is why it is said here that the Lord spoke so sweetly that his friends and devotees, i.e. the Kapis, felt very happy.]

तुम्ह अति कीन्ह मोरि सेवकाई । मुख पर केहि बिधि करौं बड़ाई ॥ ४ ॥
ताते मोहि तुम्ह अति प्रिय लागे । मम हित लागि भवन सुख त्यागे ॥ ५ ॥

tumha ati kīnhi mōri sēvakā'ī. mukha para kēhi bidhi karaum̐ barā'ī. 4.
tātē mōhi tumha ati priya lāgē. mama hita lāgi bhavana sukha tyāgē. 5.

You have done great service to me for which I am so highly obliged to you that I can't find words to express my gratitude in sufficient manner, nor do I know how to praise you all for the services you have rendered me. (4)

I have developed so much affection and a close bond of kinship with you because you have sacrificed your home and hearth, as well as your personal comfort and safety, for my sake¹. [To wit, this voluntary sacrifice of yours that you have done for my sake has endeared you to me for all times to come.] (5)

[Note—¹Here Lord Ram gives immense thanks to the Kapis and gratefully acknowledges their help in the search for Sita and then the war of Lanka. In the course of these developments it goes without saying that the monkeys and bears suffered themselves a lot; so the Lord now expresses his gratitude to them—telling them that these developments have had a positive effect inasmuch as that now he has an abiding friendship with them and has developed affection for them, which he shall cherish in his heart for eternity.]

अनुज राज संपति बैदेही । देह गेह परिवार सनेही ॥ ६ ॥
सब मम प्रिय नहिं तुम्हहि समाना । मृषा न कहउँ मोर यह बाना ॥ ७ ॥
सब कें प्रिय सेवक यह नीती । मोरें अधिक दास पर प्रीती ॥ ८ ॥

anuja rāja sampati baidēhī. dēha gēha parivāra sanēhī. 6.
saba mama priya nahim̐ tumhahi samānā. mṛṣā na kaha'um̐ mōra yaha bānā. 7.
saba kēm̐ priya sēvaka yaha nītī. mōrēm̐ adhika dāsa para prītī. 8.

[Elaborating further and highlighting how much he cherishes their friendship and acquaintance in his heart, Lord Ram stresses—]

My brothers, my kingdom, my wealth, and my wife Sita (Vaidehi), nay, even my own body, my home, my whole family, my kith and kin – (6)

-- Verily I love them all, but truly not more than you! I don't speak a lie, and this is my affirmation¹. (7)

It is an established principle that a faithful, loyal and diligent servant (who would do everything within his might to serve his lord, and that too selflessly) is always loved by his master; but I go a step further in upholding this maxim—because I am all the more inclined to have greater affection for all those who serve me and follow me; I love them and am favourably inclined to them (and go out of my way to take care of them) far more than what I am expected to do². (8)

[Note—¹It is not that Lord Ram did not love all those he has mentioned here; the only point he wished to stress is that he loves his friends from Kishkindha much more than he loves anyone else. The reason is simple and obvious—during the testing times of his life when he was facing the wrath of a malicious Fate, when he was forlorn, almost lost and desperate, when it was a swing between life and death, when everything seemed to be lost for him after his wife Sita was stolen by the ferocious demon king Ravana, defeating whom was well nigh impossible, then at that time it were the Kapis of Kishkindha who had come to his aid, and no one else. How can he forget it?

²Lord Ram says: “Though it is normal that a master would naturally have special affection for a servant who serves him faithfully and diligently, but in my case this affection is exceptional; it is steady, abiding, and of the highest degree. The ordinary master may get angry at his favourite servant in a situation where the servant might fail to serve him on any occasion for any reason whatsoever, but I never ever get angry at my devotees, no matter what happens or what the provocation is.”

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 3-6 that precede Doha no. 183; (ii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 260; and (b) Uttar Kand, (iii) Chaupai line nos. 6-7 that precede Doha no. 1 (where Bharat endorses this view); (iv) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 43 (Lord Ram tells this fact to the citizens of Ayodhya who had collected to listen to one of his regular discourses); (v) Chaupai line nos. 7-10 that precede Doha no. 86 (as told to Kaagbhushund).]

दो०. अब गृह जाहु सखा सब भजेहु मोहि दृढ़ नेम ।

सदा सर्बगत सर्बहित जानि करेहु अति प्रेम ॥ १६ ॥

dōhā.

aba gr̥ha jāhu sakhā saba bhajēhu mōhi dṛṛha nēma.

sadā sarbagata sarbahita jāni karēhu ati prēma. 16.

Now my dear friend, go home. Remember me; have an abiding affection and devotion for me by remembering that I am always present everywhere (to help you), that I am always ready to look after the welfare of all, and that I always think good of others.¹ (Doha no. 16)

[Note—¹These are some of the excellent and laudable characters of Lord Ram. Essentially, the Lord tells his friends that they must remember that he (Lord Ram) will always remain their friend, that they are welcome to come and visit him whenever they so wished, that he is ever ready to help them if the need arises and they

need his help in anyway whatsoever. Lord Ram told them that he is not selfish, that he would not forget their obligation upon him, and that he would always remain with them at the subtle plane of their memories and remembrance. So they should not regret going home, for the Lord would be with them at the ethereal level of existence. In order to maintain this eternal relationship, it also requires of them to remember the Lord, as much as the Lord remembers them, which he has promised he would on his part, and expects them to honour their part as well.]

चौ०. सुनि प्रभु बचन मगन सब भए । को हम कहाँ बिसरि तन गए ॥ १ ॥
 एकटक रहे जोरि कर आगे । सकहिं न कछु कहि अति अनुरागे ॥ २ ॥
 परम प्रेम तिन्ह कर प्रभु देखा । कहा बिबिधि बिधि ग्यान बिसेषा ॥ ३ ॥

caupāī.

sunī prabhu bacana magana saba bha'e. kō hama kahām'bisari tana ga'e. 1.
 ēkaṭaka rahē jōri kara āgē. sakahiṁ na kachu kahi ati anurāgē. 2.
 parama prēma tinha kara prabhu dēkhā. kahā bibidhi bidhi gyāna bisēṣā. 3.

Hearing the words of Lord Ram, all the Kapis were overwhelmed; they became so overcome with emotions that for sometime they lost awareness of themselves and their surroundings—of who they were, where they were, from whence they had come and whither they are expected to go. (1)

They stood stunned and dumbfounded with their joined palms before the Lord, looking at him transfixed. They were so overcome with emotions of affection and love for the Lord that they were rendered speechless¹. (2)

When the Lord observed the intensity of their love and affection (as well as devotion) for him, he assuaged their feelings and comforted them in various ways by enlightening them about the realities of this world and practical aspects of life². (3)

[Note—¹Love is such an intense emotional feeling that when someone you love dearly asks you to go away, then for sometime you would not know what to say and how to respond. The time of separation had come, and it was un-nerving for Lord Ram's dear friends. They had wished to live with him more; they did not want to go back. The Lord had shown them so much favour and attention and affection that they would rather prefer to spend the rest of their lives in Ayodhya, serving him, than going back home. They wished to settle down in Ayodhya and make it their new home.

So, when Lord Ram asked them to go back to their respective homes in Kishkindha, it came as a shock to them all.

²Lord Ram acknowledged their devotion and love for him. Then he explained to them many practical things of life, such as the necessity of attending to their obligations and responsibilities that they had towards their own families and people back home. The Lord enlightened them about what true relationship and true love are, that physical distance matters not if one has true love for anyone in his heart, that the strength of relationship is proved when two loving people live apart from one another

rather than together, because distance helps to test this strength, to test whether the bond is fragile or strong.

The Lord also explained to them that it is a maxim that when two persons live close to each other, no matter how dear and fond they are of each other, but a day comes when some sort of friction or misunderstanding between the two is sure to raise its ugly head, souring their otherwise sweet relationship. This mishap is taken care of by living apart.

There were many other such small and big issues of life that the Lord explained to them in an effort to comfort them and persuade them to return home.]

प्रभु सन्मुख कछु कहन न पारहिं । पुनि पुनि चरन सरोज निहारहिं ॥ ४ ॥

तब प्रभु भूषन बसन मगाए । नाना रंग अनूप सुहाए ॥ ५ ॥

prabhu sanmukha kachu kahana na pārahim̐. puni puni carana sarōja nihārahim̐. 4.

taba prabhu bhūṣana basana magā'ē. nānā raṅga anūpa suhā'ē. 5.

None of them could muster courage to say anything before the Lord; they could not even utter a word. [To wit, all the guests of Lord Ram, the 'Kapis', stood silently before him as they were so overwhelmed with emotions that they could not decide what to say, and how to ask the Lord not to tell them to go back home. They kept quiet in deference to the Lord's presence and majesty, because answering the Lord would be impolite and bad in terms of observation of decorum. They could not even tell the Lord that they would rather prefer to settle down in Ayodhya permanently, and continue to serve him for the rest of their lives.]

They repeatedly glanced at the holy lotus-like feet of Lord Ram (as a subtle sign to indicate what they intended to say but dared not speak and let known in an articulate language—that they would prefer to serve the holy feet of Lord Ram instead of going back home)¹. (4)

Meanwhile, Lord Ram called for beautiful ornaments and clothes (ceremonial robes of honour) of different colours and designs (which he would give as gifts to his friends before saying good bye to them). (5)

[Note—¹The Kapis stood silently because they were in a dilemma. To speak before the Lord and say that they don't wish to go back would be tantamount to disobedience and in-courteous behaviour. But at the same time they sincerely wished that Lord Ram would allow them to stay in Ayodhya and serve him. So they repeatedly glanced at the feet of the Lord to convey a silent message that they would rather stay, and that they wished to serve him.

²But since it was not feasible and practical to allow them to stay in Ayodhya as discussed earlier, the Lord got gifts of clothes and ornaments brought in so that a clear hint is given to them that they must go back to their homes.]

सुग्रीवहि प्रथमहिं पहिराए । बसन भरत निज हाथ बनाए ॥ ६ ॥

प्रभु प्रेरित लछिमन पहिराए । लंकापति रघुपति मन भाए ॥ ७ ॥
अंगद बैठ रहा नहिं डोला । प्रीति देखि प्रभु ताहि न बोला ॥ ८ ॥

sugrīvahi prathamahim pahirā'ē. basana bharata nija hātha banā'ē. 6.
prabhu prērita lachimana pahirā'ē. laṅkāpati raghupati mana bhā'ē. 7.
aṅgada baiṭha rahā nahim dōlā. prīti dēkhi prabhu tāhi na bōlā. 8.

Lord Ram adorned Sugriv with robes of honour first (because the latter was the king of the monkey race and the senior-most amongst the Lord's guests). These ceremonial robes were tailored by Bharat with his own hands (during the time of the 14 years of self-imposed isolation that he spent while Lord Ram was in the forest). (6)

At the same time (as Lord Ram made Sugriv wear robes of honour), Laxman, on behest of Lord Ram, adorned Vibhishan, the king of Lanka, with matching robes of honour; this pleased the Lord much¹. (7)

Meanwhile, Angad (the crown prince of Kishkindha and Sugriv's nephew, being the son of the latter's elder brother Baali) kept on sitting; he did not move. Lord Ram observed it closely, and realizing the exemplarily high level of Angad's loyalty and devotion for him, the Lord did not ask him to come forward to accept the ceremonial robes². (8)

[Note—¹Lord Ram, being the sovereign of Ayodhya, adorned Sugriv, who was also a sovereign of Kishkindha and the senior-most in the rank of commanders, while at the same time Laxman, the second in rank, adorned Vibhishan, who was a notch junior to Sugriv in the hierarchy of things. Why? It is simple: Sugriv led the conquering army as its king and commander, while Vibhishan got his throne after victory of this army. So although both were presently kings in their own rights, but Sugriv obviously had a more right of way as compared to Vibhishan, entitling him to get honour first.

²Lord Ram perceived that Angad was unwilling to leave him and go back. The Lord could see the sadness in Angad's face and plea for exemption from going back by the looks of his eyes. So the Lord kept quiet and did not ask Angad to step forward to be honoured along with Sugriv and Vibhishan.]

दो०. जामवंत नीलादि सब पहिराए रघुनाथ ।
हियँ धरि राम रूप सब चले नाइ पद माथ ॥ १७ (क) ॥
dōhā.

jāmavanta nīlādi saba pahirā'ē raghunātha.
hiyam̐ dhari rāma rūpa saba calē nā'i pada mātha. 17 (a).

Lord Ram himself clothed Jamvant (the chief of the bears), Neela (one of the chief commanders of the Lord's army from Kishkindha), and all the others (who had come with Lord Ram aboard the plane from Lanka) with robes of honour.

Then all of them bowed their heads reverentially at Lord Ram's feet, and enshrining the Lord's image in their hearts, they departed for their homeland. (Doha no. 17-a)

तब अंगद उठि नाइ सिरु सजल नयन कर जोरि ।
अति बिनीत बोलेउ बचन मनहुँ प्रेम रस बोरि ॥ १७ (ख) ॥

taba aṅgada uṭhi nā'i siru sajala nayana kara jōri.
ati binīta bōlē'u bacana manahum' prēma rasa bōri. 17 (b).

When everybody else had departed, Angad got up and bowed his head before Lord Ram with his eyes filled with tears and the palms of his hands joined together in a prayerful mode.

Angad spoke most politely and humbly, beseeching the Lord by using words that seemed to be soaked in emotions of love and affection for the Lord¹. (Doha no. 17-b)

[Note—¹Angad kept sitting quietly while all others were being honoured by Lord Ram by offering ceremonial robes to them and then given a warm send-off.

We have read earlier (in Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes this Doha) that when it had become evident that Lord Ram intended to send his guests back from Ayodhya to their respective homes in Kishkindha and Lanka, Angad did not like the idea of going back. So he kept sitting quietly and did not join others to receive gifts and robes of honour from Lord Ram as parting gifts before departure.

Now when he found Lord Ram alone, he got up to plead his case, with tears in his eyes, most humble looks, and prayerful words infused with devotion and love for the Lord in as best a manner as he possibly could.]

चौ०. सुनु सर्वग्य कृपा सुख सिंधो । दीन दयाकर आरत बंधो ॥ १ ॥
मरती बेर नाथ मोहि बाली । गयउ तुम्हारेहि कोछें घाली ॥ २ ॥
असरन सरन बिरदु संभारी । मोहि जनि तजहु भगत हितकारी ॥ ३ ॥
caupāī.

sunu sarbagya kṛpā sukha sindhō. dīna dayākara ārata bandhō. 1.
maratī bēra nātha mōhi bālī. gaya'u tumhārēhi kōñchēm ghālī. 2.
asarana sarana biradu sambhārī. mōhi jani tajahu bhagata hitakārī. 3.

[Angad submitted most humbly and pleadingly—]

'Listen oh Lord who is all-knowing (sarbagya) as well as an ocean of happiness, grace, compassion and mercy (kṛpā sukha sindhō).

You show mercy to the lowly and the humble (dīna dayākara), and are a friend of those who are distressed and looking for solace and succour (ārata bandhō). (1)

At the time of his death, Baali (my father) had put me in your care and safe custody¹.
(2)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chanda line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 10.

At the time of his death, Baali had prayed to Lord Ram to take care of his son Angad, requesting the Lord to hold him by his arm and look after his welfare by treating Angad as his own servant and dependant. Angad now invokes that request to ask Lord Ram to keep his father's last wishes and let him stay in Ayodhya to serve the Lord.

It ought to be noted carefully here that at that time Lord Ram had kept quiet; the Lord had not expressly accepted Baali's request asking him "to keep Angad as his servant". The word used by Baali was "*dāsa*"—which literally means a servant, but by extension it also means someone who depends upon his lord.

What Baali actually wished from Lord Ram was to protect Angad after his death. Baali was apprehensive of Angad's safety and future because Sugriv, Baali's younger brother and Angad's uncle, would be probably tormenting Angad and may even go further to kill him on some pretext as he would see the orphaned Angad as a rival claimant to the throne of Kishkindha. Lord Ram recognized this possibility, that Sugriv would usurp the hereditary right of Angad over the crown of Kishkindha which he was lawfully entitled to by the virtue of being the son of Baali.

To pre-empt Sugriv from completely disenfranchising Angad and throwing him out of the kingdom of Kishkindha, Lord Ram had declared Angad as the heir-apparent and a crown prince of Kishkindha at the time of Sugriv's own appointment as the king in place of his dead brother Baali.

Not only this, Lord Ram had always shown a soft corner for Angad, and treated him as one of his most trusted lieutenants, at par with Hanuman. We must have observed presently that while others were being given a send-off by Lord Ram, the Lord did not insist on Angad too leaving with them. Surely, all others who went away must have noticed this crucial point. Privately Sugriv must have felt very happy, thinking of Angad staying back as good riddance. But at the same time, all must have realized that Lord Ram surely loved Angad more as the Lord did not insist his going back with others.

We shall soon read that, by-and-by, Lord Ram prevailed upon Angad to return home to Kishkindha, although the Lord could have as well accepted his plea to remain in Ayodhya. The reason for the Lord's decision to send Angad back to his kingdom is this: The Lord had to keep his promise made to his father Baali that he would take care of Angad and ensure he lives a honourable life—and that is why Angad was made the heir-apparent and a crown prince of Kishkindha. Now, if Angad was allowed to stay back in Ayodhya to serve the Lord, then he would have forfeited this right and privilege. Besides this, it would have given a chance to Sugriv to fill the vacancy by appointing someone of his own choice. Should this actually happen, Angad would permanently lose his right.

Angad was a 'prince' of a great kingdom of Kishkindha; keeping a 'prince' as a servant, or a courtier or any junior functionary in the kingdom of Ayodhya would be absolutely wrong for Lord Ram; it would have not only been insulting for Angad but would have surely lowered the Lord's own image and reputation in the world. And it would have given Sugriv a fodder to spread bad words for the Lord behind his back—that Lord Ram has kept Angad with him in order to symbolically subjugate the monkey race because Angad was not an ordinary member of this race but their 'prince

and an heir-apparent to the throne, who would one day become the king of Kishkindha'.

To wit, Lord Ram's keeping Angad in Ayodhya to serve him would be a humiliating thing for the entire monkey race, because he was their prince and a rightful claimant to the throne of their kingdom, which in turn would not go down well in terms of long-time friendship.

Many such factors came into play when Lord Ram decided to send Angad back home instead of accepting his request to allow him to stay in Ayodhya.

As for Angad, besides his love for Lord Ram, there were other considerations why he did not wish to go back. His uncle Sugriv had killed his father Baali to grab the crown, so Angad was sure he would be ill-treated if he went to Kishkindha. But this fear of Angad was taken care when Lord Ram showed special treatment to him by allowing him to stay back for sometime after all others have left.

Eventually, when Angad did return to Kishkindha after some time, everyone was sure that Lord Ram has sent him as his own ambassador in disguise, so all those who might harbour ill design against him must be ware of severe repercussions should Lord Ram get a hint that Angad is in danger.

It was not hidden from anyone that Angad shared a special bond of affection with Lord Ram, that he was dear to the Lord and close to his heart, that there was an affinity between the two. This meant that everyone in Kishkindha treated Angad kindly and with great respect. Sugriv, even if he had some secret agenda against Angad in the beginning, had by now decided to forget it and treat him with affection.]

मोरें तुम्ह प्रभु गुर पितु माता । जाउँ कहाँ तजि पद जलजाता ॥ ४ ॥

तुम्हहि बिचारि कहहु नरनाहा । प्रभु तजि भवन काज मम काहा ॥ ५ ॥

बालक ग्यान बुद्धि बल हीना । राखहु सरन नाथ जन दीना ॥ ६ ॥

mōrēm tumha prabhu gura pitu mātā. jā'um' kahām' taji pada jalajātā. 4.
tumhahi bicāri kahahu naranāhā. prabhu taji bhavana kāja mama kāhā. 5.
bālaka gyāna bud'dhi bala hīnā. rākhahu sarana nātha jana dīnā. 6.

Oh dear Lord; for me you are my guru (revered teacher and guide) as well as my parent, my father and mother, and protector.

Tell me Lord, this being the truthful case, where can I go except your lotus-like feet? [To wit, I have no place to go; I have no other destination; I have no home where I can find rest, peace, solace and succour except you and your holy feet.] (4)

Oh Lord; think yourself and tell me what work do I have at home if I leave (serving) you? [Verily indeed, in all sooth and without gainsay, I have no work anywhere else, I have nothing to do at home. If I leave you, I will be lost and lonely; I have no kith and kin except you.] (5)

Treat me as a child who is humble, innocent, lowly, and devoid of all skills and intelligence (making him unfit for the world, useless, not liked by anyone, and who has to taken special care by his parent because of his shortcomings and inabilities).

Oh gracious and merciful Lord! Considering me to be humble and lowly, and one who is utterly distressed and overcome with grief, please be kind to keep me as

your refugee, and let me stay with you. [Truly Lord, I don't want to go home; I wish to stay with you.] (6)

नीचि टहल गृह कै सब करिहउँ । पद पंकज बिलोकि भव तरिहउँ ॥ ७ ॥
अस कहि चरन परेउ प्रभु पाही । अब जनि नाथ कहहु गृह जाही ॥ ८ ॥

nīci ṭahala gr̥ha kai saba kariha'um̐. pada paṅkaja bilōki bhava tariha'um̐. 7.
asa kahi carana parē'u prabhu pāhī. aba jani nātha kahahu gr̥ha jāhī. 8.

[I will not be a burden or problem for either you or anyone else in your household, because—] I will serve you like an ordinary servant, and do all the most humble of menial jobs of your household that you assign me to do.

While doing so, I shall always be privileged to see and serve your holy lotus-like feet, which in turn will help me obtain liberation and deliverance from this mundane existence in this gross world, and thereby attain emancipation and salvation for my soul.' (7)

Saying this and pleading most earnestly to Lord Ram, Angad fell down at the feet of the Lord and prayed: 'Oh my dear and merciful Lord; please don't tell me again to go back home.' (8)

दो०. अंगद बचन बिनीत सुनि रघुपति करुना सींव ।
प्रभु उठाइ उर लायउ सजल नयन राजीव ॥ १८ (क) ॥
निज उर माल बसन मनि बालितनय पहिराइ ।
बिदा कीन्हि भगवान तब बहु प्रकार समुझाइ ॥ १८ (ख) ॥

dōhā.

aṅgada bacana binīta suni raghupati karunā sīnva.
prabhu uṭhā'i ura lāya'u sajala nayana rājīva. 18 (a).
nija ura māla basana mani bālitanaya pahirā'i.
bidā kīnhi bhagavāna taba bahu prakāra samujhā'i. 18 (b).

Hearing Angad's pitiful prayer, Lord Raghupati (i.e. Lord Ram), who is an embodiment of mercy and compassion, was overwhelmed with love and affection for him.

The Lord picked him up and clasped him to his bosom, with tears welling up in his lotus-like eyes. (Doha no. 18-a)

Lord Ram took his own garland that hung over his chest and put it around Angad's neck. The Lord also adorned Angad, the son of Baali (bālitanaya), with clothes and jewels that he himself wore¹.

Then the Lord (bhagavāna) reassured him in a variety of ways, explaining the pros and cons of the situation, the necessity of his going back, the practical reasons of the Lord's decision to send him back to Kishkindha instead of keeping him

in Ayodhya, and then blessing him profusely, the Lord send him off with a heavy heart². (Doha no. 18-b)

[Note—¹It ought to be noted here all others too were given clothes, ornaments and other gifts, but the difference is that Lord Ram gave Angad his personal items of clothes and ornaments, and even the garland that he wore himself.

This was surely a very special gesture and had a special meaning: these gift items would make Angad feel like touching the Lord personally whenever he touched them when at home. They were the personal things of Lord Ram, and therefore they would remind Angad that the Lord held him very close and dear to his heart.

When someone gives another person any item of his personal use as a token of remembrance at the time of seeing him off, it obviously means that the latter is shown special treatment by the former, to remind the latter that he is very close to the former and has a special place in his heart.

When Angad returned to Kishkindha, everyone could see that he has been shown special treatment and honour by Lord Ram, that Angad is closer to the Lord than anyone of them.

²We have already discussed in the note appended to Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede this Doha why Lord Ram was compelled to send Angad back inspite of the latter's so earnest a request to let him stay in Ayodhya to serve the Lord. So when Lord Ram explained to Angad the situation from different angles, the necessity and the prudence of his going back home, Angad finally agreed, though he did so most reluctantly and with a heavy and sad heart.

Now, let us briefly see why Lord Ram insisted that Angad ought to go back home to Kishkindha.

(a) At the time of appointing Sugriv, uncle of Angad, as a king of Kishkindha, Lord Ram had anointed Angad as the heir-apparent, the crown prince, and the next in line to the throne. The Lord ensured by this step that after Sugriv's stepping down from kingdom of Kishkindha for any reason whatsoever, Angad would rightfully become the next king, and not Sugriv's son or anyone selected by him. This choice of Angad as the next king was definitely correct, as Angad was the son of Baali, the elder brother of Sugriv, whom the latter got killed due to some personal feud. Had Baali lived, it was normal that after him his son Angad would have ascended the throne, and not Sugriv. Hence, Lord Ram did nothing else but restore this traditional right to Angad.

But surely Sugriv must have been jealous of Angad, seeing him as a contender to the throne, and therefore he didn't like Angad. Angad understood this sticky situation and had explicitly said so to his companions on the shore of the ocean in Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-6 that precede Doha no. 26. Angad had a serious apprehension that Sugriv would have him killed on one excuse or another. His only safety was in the hands of Lord Ram, for Sugriv dared not oppose the Lord.

This was the primary reason why Angad wished to stay with Lord Ram in Ayodhya instead of going back to Kishkindha.

But this fear of Angad was taken well care of by the Lord. When Lord Ram adorned him with personal royal clothes, ornaments and garland, it was a clear-as-daylight sign to one and all that Angad was very close to the Lord, and nobody ever dare raise an evil eye against him.

When Angad went back to Kishkindha attired in such fine regalia, unique to Lord Ram, and bearing the signature royal emblems, motifs, signs, and court-of-arms of the kingdom of Ayodhya, he represented Lord Ram in Kishkindha; he was the Lord's ambassador, his emissary, his representative.

So, this served many purposes: One, it kept Sugriv under leash; he knew that if he committed any mischief on any front, Angad would report back to Lord Ram, and then Sugriv would be punished. Second, it ensured that Angad got respect and honour due to him as a crown prince and heir apparent of the kingdom; he would not have to live at Sugriv's mercy. Third, Lord Ram could monitor things in Kishkindha.

(b) Lord Ram was a most gracious, compassionate, kind, magnanimous and courteous king the world had and has ever known. The Lord had made Sugriv, who was the king of Kishkindha, as one of his friends, and Angad as the crown prince of the same kingdom. This being the case, it would seem very bad if Lord Ram kept Angad as his courtier; the world would say that the Lord has made Kishkindha a vassal state by allowing its crown prince to serve him as an ordinary courtier. It would undermine the Lord's immaculate reputation and scar his glory.

Those in Kishkindha would have special reason to feel affected negatively, because all loved Angad as he was an orphan, and a nice person, almost similar to Hanuman in his nature.

(c) If Angad was allowed to stay in Ayodhya, Sugriv would get what he wanted without any trouble, for if the crown prince was absent for a long time, he would find an excuse to appoint his son or anyone else on that post, saying he needed help in running the day-to-day administration affairs of the kingdom. And once someone was appointed, Angad would be disinherited forever, and most importantly, the blame for this unfortunate development would fall squarely at Lord Ram's door.

(e) Further, Lord Ram was apprehensive of Sugriv. He feared that in the future there were good chances that Sugriv might eye the territory of Lanka, and use his powerful army to launch a military campaign on Lanka to usurp the throne from Vibhishan on one pretext or another. Lord Ram had given his personal word of honour to Vibhishan that he would always protect him as his devotee and friend; so what would happen then?

Even if Sugriv did not think in these terms, who can say Vibhishan won't? Couldn't Vibhishan launch a vicious attack on Kishkindha to settle old scores against Sugriv, for the sack of Lanka was done by the army of Kishkindha led by Sugriv?

By keeping Angad in Kishkindha, the Lord felt that both these unfortunate developments could be pre-empted and avoided, because Angad would step in and rein the warring parties in straight away, before the situation went out of hand.

(f) The Lord had decided to keep Hanuman with him. If he kept Angad too, there were chances that in due course of time these two would start quarreling amongst themselves over petty matters, causing unnecessary intrigue and ill-will. So it was prudent and wiser to keep them separate.

Lord Ram decided that since Hanuman and Angad were close friends, had good affinity with each other, and had always stayed together during the war too, it would be easier for the Lord to keep the communication channels with Kishkindha open and well-oiled by employing their services. Since both of them were loyal to the Lord, the matter would be so much the easier and information reliable.

(g) Angad had not observed rules of protocol: for it was, and still is, an established custom that when two states or kingdoms or countries are on friendly terms, such as Ayodhya and Kishkindha in our present case, and a citizen of one country wishes to go and live in the other, then he must first obtain permission from the king or governing authority of his own country before applying to stay in the other country. Angad ought to have first taken Sugriv, the king of his native country as well as his uncle, into confidence, telling him that he wished to stay for a while with Lord Ram before approaching the Lord with this request. It is obvious Sugriv wouldn't have denied this permission, and then all decks would have been clear for Angad, because after he had formally obtained Sugriv's permission, it would have been a lot difficult for even Lord Ram to deny it to him; Lord Ram couldn't have insisted that Angad go back to his home country as that would have seemed defying Sugriv himself whose permission Angad had already obtained. In that eventuality, if Lord Ram sent Angad back, it would have soured relationships between two good friends, Lord Ram and Sugriv, both of whom were, at that point of time, independent Kings in their own rights.

But then, why didn't Angad request Sugriv's permission, and instead approached Lord Ram directly? What may have been the probable reason? Well, the answer is this: Angad both feared and hated Sugriv. Why? Angad feared that his uncle would deny him this permission to stay in Ayodhya under Lord Ram's protection because he would prefer that Angad remains within his reach so that one day or the other he would surely kill him*¹, on one pretext or another, to get him out of the way, for Angad thought that his uncle, who had killed his father Baali to grab the crown, will see Angad as a contender to the throne of Kishkindha, especially when Lord Ram had himself got Angad appointed as the heir-apparent and the crown prince*². Angad hated Sugriv obviously because the latter taken the help of Lord Ram to have his father Baali killed*³.

So Angad did not wish to see Sugriv's face and talk with him. On the other hand, he saw in Lord Ram his only succour, guardian and protector in this world, and he has expressly mentioned this fact to the Lord while pleading with him to let him stay in Ayodhya*⁴ as a sort of insurance against his uncle.

{*¹Apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-6 that precede Doha no. 26.

*²Apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Doha no. 11.

*³Apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 26 that precedes Doha no. 7—to Doha no. 8.

*⁴Apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chanda line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 10.}

Lord Ram had to take many such factors, small and big, into consideration while deciding on Angad's plea, and everything weighed in favour of the decision to send him back home, though it meant an extremely painful parting for both, Lord Ram as well as Angad.

So the Lord took him aside and explained everything to him in detail, telling him: "Look son! Thou art very dear to me, but we have to take many things into view as both of us are responsible persons; we can't behave like a naïve child. Look: you are always, anytime and in any situation, welcome here; you need no permission from either me or anyone else for it. Listen: thou art not going back to Kishkindha out of thine free will, but on my express orders. Hence, even whilst being there, thou art

carrying out my wishes just as thou wouldst have done it if thou hadst lived here. Suppose I command thee to go to some place on an errand, tell me, wouldst thou not go? So take it this way—thou art going to Kishkindha on my command. So be cheerful and happy; don't feel hard at all. Thou art mine, and so wilt thou ever remain for eternity!”

As far as Angad was concerned, after all it would have been wrong on his part to defy the Lord and go against his wishes; being a true devotee and a loyal follower of Lord Ram, it was obligatory on Angad, and expected of him as well, that he would pay heed to the Lord and keep his wishes before his own.

So therefore, since Lord Ram desired that Angad should go back, the latter had no choice but to obey.]

चौ०. भरत अनुज सौमित्रि समेता । पठवन चले भगत कृत चेता ॥ १ ॥

अंगद हृदयं प्रेम नहिं थोरा । फिरि फिरि चितव राम कीं ओरा ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

bharata anuja saumitri samētā. paṭhavana calē bhagata kṛta cētā. 1.

aṅgada hṛdayam^ṛprēma nahim^ṛthōrā. phiri phiri citava rāma kīm^ṛōrā. 2.

Lord Ram, who always keeps the good of his devotees in view¹, went out of his way to give an emotional and warm send-off to Angad by taking along with him all his three younger brothers, Bharat, Shatrughan and Laxman (bharata anuja saumitri samētā). (1)

Angad's heart lacked no affection for Lord Ram; in fact it overwhelmed him and overflowed from his heart as was evident when he repeatedly looked back at the Lord (with tears in his sad eyes and pain in his grief-stricken heart)². (2)

[Note—¹This fact, that “Lord Ram always keeps the good of his devotees in view” vis-à-vis Angad, has been explained in detail in the notes appended to previous verses.

²Angad was torn between emotions. He sobbed and sighed silently; he glanced back over his shoulders; he stopped in his path and turned around to directly look back as if expecting that the Lord would call him back at the last moment (as will be clear in the next verse), to have a last glimpse of his dear Lord whose sight he would be dearly missing for a long time to come, a prospect that grieved him more than anything else.

Angad did not know what to do and what not to; should he defy the Lord and turn back at all costs, or should he proceed to his destination; should he go to the forest and become a recluse somewhere near Ayodhya. Poor Angad felt forlorn, pensive, lonely and extremely sad. He literally dragged his legs that felt heavy-as-lead to move forward, but he had no choice: he could not disobey the Lord. He could see that Lord Ram's face was as sad as his own; they too had tears in their eyes as his did; the Lord took deep breaths and stood forlorn and lonely and grieving in the same way as Angad felt.

This reassured Angad that Lord Ram truly loved him, perhaps more than he imagines; to some extent he felt comforted, realizing that the Lord would miss him as

much as he would miss the Lord. He thought that perhaps the Lord thought it was in Angad's own interest to go back, and so in spite of the emotional sufferings the Lord insisted on it.]

बार बार कर दंड प्रनामा । मन अस रहन कहहिं मोहि रामा ॥ ३ ॥
राम बिलोकनि बोलनि चलनी । सुमिरि सुमिरि सोचत हँसि मिलनी ॥ ४ ॥

bāra bāra kara daṇḍa pranāmā. mana asa rahana kahahim mōhi rāmā. 3.
rāma bilōkani bōlani calanī. sumiri sumiri sōcata haṁsi milanī. 4.

He (Angad) turned back and repeatedly fell down prostrate on the ground in the direction of Lord Ram, to pay his homage to the Lord, expecting that may be at the last moment the Lord would ask him to stay back. (3)

Angad remembered all those pleasant moments of the past that recalled to his memory how Lord Ram used to look at him, how the Lord talked with him, how the Lord walked alongside with him, how the Lord would smile and laugh at his little deeds and naughty acts! These memories filled his mind and buffeted his emotions relentlessly; they overwhelmed him and overpowered him with grief and sadness¹. (4)

[Note—¹Indeed it was a very sad and heart-breaking parting. To speak the truth, the author of the current Book has himself wept bitterly while typing out this episode on the computer, as well as the one where Angad takes his leave from Hanuman a little while later.]

प्रभु रुख देखि बिनय बहु भाषी । चलेउ हृदयँ पद पंकज राखी ॥ ५ ॥
अति आदर सब कपि पहुँचाए । भाइन्ह सहित भरत पुनि आए ॥ ६ ॥

prabhu rukha dēkhi binaya bahu bhāṣī. calē'u hṛdayam̐ pada paṅkaja rākhi. 5.
ati ādara saba kapi pahum̐cā'ē. bhā'inha sahita bharata puni ā'ē. 6.

But Angad by-and-by realized that it was Lord Ram's desire that he should go back to his home in Kishkindha.

So finally he prayed to Lord Ram most humbly and politely, and enshrining the Lord's lotus-like holy feet in his heart, Angad departed from there. (5)

[Other Kapis were waiting at a distance. Angad went and joined them.]

All the Kapis (who had collected outside the gates of the royal palace) were respectfully taken to the borders of the city of Ayodhya, from where they were given an affectionate and ceremonial send-off. After this, Bharat and his other brothers returned back¹. (6)

[Note—¹It is to be carefully noted here that it is 'Bharat' who is mentioned in the verse as having returned back with his brothers after the departure of the Kapis, and Lord Ram isn't mentioned.

It clearly means that Lord Ram, being the sovereign, desisted from going much further away from the gates of the fort or palace ground beyond a certain limit to maintain decorum and dignity of the Crown. On his behalf he deputed his three brothers, led by Bharat, to accompany his Kapi friends till the borders of the city and send them off from there.

Perhaps Lord Ram would have gone himself, but he was surely so emotionally upset at the sight of the sad Angad departing with pain on his face and deep sadness reflecting from his demeanours that the Lord thought that he would not be able to restrain his own emotions if he saw Angad lamenting in the same way again, for it was too unbearable a sight for the merciful Lord Ram to cope with. So it was prudent and wise for the Lord to stay away and allow his brothers to go with his friends to the periphery of the city to see them off and bid them farewell from there.

Remember: Lord Ram was not alone; he was a King, and therefore a large retinue of courtiers and citizens were there to watch the proceedings. Then there were his Kapi friends. Imagine what a delicate and sensitive and piquant situation would arise in case Angad started wailing and weeping and falling at the Lord's feet in front of everyone's eyes just prior to departure, pleading with the Lord to let him stay back? It would be a doleful scene and an extremely painful situation that had to be avoided at all costs.]

तब सुग्रीव चरन गहि नाना । भाँति बिनय कीन्हे हनुमाना ॥ ७ ॥
 दिन दस करि रघुपति पद सेवा । पुनि तव चरन देखिहउँ देवा ॥ ८ ॥
 पुन्य पुंज तुम्ह पवनकुमारा । सेवहु जाइ कृपा आगारा ॥ ९ ॥
 अस कहि कपि सब चले तुरन्ता । अंगद कहइ सुनहु हनुमन्ता ॥ १० ॥

taba sugrīva carana gahi nānā. bhām̐ti binaya kīnhē hanumānā. 7.
 dina dasa kari raghupati pada sēvā. puni tava carana dēkhiha'um̐ dēvā. 8.
 pun'ya pun̐ja tumha pavanakumārā. sēvahu jā'i krpā āgārā. 9.
 asa kahi kapi saba calē turantā. aṅgada kaha'i sunahu hanumantā. 10.

Then (when final good-byes were being said on the borders of Ayodhya), Hanuman approached Sugriv and fell at his feet, praying to him in different ways (so that his request is accepted)¹. (7)

Hanuman pleaded before Sugriv, 'Oh Lord! Let me serve Lord Ram's feet for some ten days more (i.e. for some more time), and then oh Lord, I shall come back to you see your feet (and serve you)².' (8)

Sugriv (and all others present there^{3*}) lauded Hanuman's initiative. They said: 'Oh Hanuman, the son of the wind god (pavanakumārā)! Indeed and in all sooth, you are a fountainhead of everything that is considered meritorious and auspicious (pun'ya pun̐ja tumha). Blessed are you truly. Go, cheerfully go, and serve the Lord (Ram) who is an abode of, an embodiment of grace, compassion, kindness, mercy and magnanimity (krpā āgārā)!' (9)

Blessing Hanuman in this way, all the Kapis^{3*}, immediately departed from there on their journey back home.

Angad, however, fell back from the rest of the group, and pulled Hanuman aside to have a last minute chat with him. He said, ‘Listen Hanuman. ---- (10)

[Note—¹A remarkable thing has happened here. While Angad was pleading his case before Lord Ram, Hanuman stood quietly and observed. He was also there when Lord Ram explained to Angad the various reasons why he could not allow him to stay back in Ayodhya, and amongst them one was that it was against norms to allow a citizen of a friendly country to live in one’s own country without his having obtained a prior permission from the ruler of his native country, which Angad had not done.

Wise and intelligent as he was, Hanuman caught the point straight on, and so he decided to approach Sugriv first, because the latter was the king of Hanuman’s native country Kishkindha. Hanuman had rightly guessed that it would be impossible for Sugriv to deny this permission to him—because of the simple fact that Sugriv and Lord Ram were fast friends, and it would be a courteous gesture for Sugriv to allow one of his fellow citizens to remain in Ayodhya for some time more, especially when that citizen himself requests for such a permission. To deny it would be un-courteous and offending for the friendly king.

So when it is said in these verses that Hanuman prayed to Sugriv in different ways, it is simply meant that he explained to Sugriv the pros and cons of the matter while persuading the latter to accept his request and grant him the desired permission.

²What could have Sugriv possibly said when Hanuman made his request? Sugriv replied: “Well my dear Hanuman, thou art indeed very fortunate to have this privilege; I am with thee, and bless thee. Yes, definitely, thou hast my full permission without any reservations. Listen mine dear: ‘Ten days’ thou sayest—well, what are the numbers of days that matter; it’s a rare honour to be able to serve Lord Ram. So therefore, stay and serve the Lord as long as thou wish. I canst ever have a trace of an objection in it; rather I wilt be the gladdest soul alive and the happiest one if one of my countrymen is able to offer his services to Lord Ram. Look dear, hark to my advice: carry out Lord Ram’s command dutifully, diligently, faithfully, honestly, and loyally. Don’t let down the Lord ever; I don’t want to hear, mind thee, that whilst Hanuman was in the service of Lord Ram, the Lord had to face this or that problem. Thou art able in all respects; thine virtues art legendary; no one in our race is as fortunate as thou art. So put this opportunity to good use in the service of our common Lord. It will bring glory to all of us. Remember: through thee, I, on my own behalf as well as on the behalf of our entire race, wilt be serving the Lord himself! So, Go and fulfill thine wishes. Glory be to thee; all praises and honours be thine; thou art indeed the jewel of the Kapi race without doubt!”

Armed with permission from Sugriv, Hanuman returned to Lord Ram to offer himself and his services. Lord Ram must have surely smiled at Hanuman’s clever wisdom, for now the Lord was left with no choice but to allow him to remain in Ayodhya and keep serving him. Any refusal would be insulting to Sugriv, something surely Lord Ram would never wish.

³*The place and time where Hanuman prayed to Sugriv to allow him to serve Lord Ram for a few days more was just at the time of the departure of the group. Everyone was present there; it could not have been a private meeting between the two. Hence, whatever Hanuman said to Sugriv, and whatever Sugriv replied, was heard and endorsed by all the Kapis as is explicitly clear in verse no. 10.

Therefore, the permission which Hanuman got to remain in Lord Ram's service was an unanimous decision taken by all the Kapi chiefs, and not only Sugriv.

And the whole scene was witnessed by Lord Ram's three brothers who had come to bid goodbye to the guests—i.e. Bharat, Laxman and Shatrughan. So, when Hanuman returned triumphantly to present himself in the service of the Lord, the Lord glanced at his three brothers to have their opinion. And obviously all of them smiled and nodded assent, saying that Hanuman has the permission of not only Sugriv but the whole group, and so the Lord must keep him in his service.

Wonderful and remarkable! What Angad could not get directly from Lord Ram, Hanuman got the same thing with wit and wisdom!]

दो०. कहेहु दंडवत प्रभु सैं तुम्हहि कहउँ कर जोरि ।
 बार बार रघुनायकहि सुरति कराएहु मोरि ॥ १९ (क) ॥
 अस कहि चलेउ बालिसुत फिरि आयउ हनुमंत ।
 तासु प्रीति प्रभु सन कही मगन भए भगवंत ॥ १९ (ख) ॥
 कुलिसहु चाहि कठोर अति कोमल कुसुमहु चाहि ।
 चित खगेस राम कर समुझि परइ कहु काहि ॥ १९ (ग) ॥

dōhā.

kahehu daṇḍavata prabhu saim tumhahi kaha'um kara jōri.
 bāra bāra raghunāyakahi surati karā'ēhu mōri. 19 (a).
 asa kahi calē'u bālisuta phiri āya'u hanumanta.
 tāsu prīti prabhu sana kahī magana bha'ē bhagavanta. 19 (b).
 kulisahu cāhi kaṭhōra ati kōmala kusumahu cāhi.
 citta khagēsa rāma kara samujhi para'i kahu kāhi. 19 (c).

Angad pleaded with Hanuman, 'I join the palms of my hands to request you most earnestly and humbly (oh Hanuman) that when you go back to Lord Ram, tell him that I have bowed before him by prostrating myself at his feet (in a symbolic way from a distance).

My dear, remind Lord Ram of me repeatedly, over and over again (now, as well as later on, whenever you get an opportunity to do so).¹' (Doha no. 19-a)

Saying this, Angad, the son of Baali (bālisuta) departed for his journey home, while Hanuman returned back (to Ayodhya).

On his return, Hanuman went straight to the Lord and told him about Angad's deep love and intensity of affection for him, which deeply moved the Lord and affected him so much that he lost awareness of himself and became ecstatic in delight (magana bha'ē bhagavanta)#.

[#This is an extremely heart-touching and emotionally stirring Doha that would move even the most hard-hearted person. Angad's final moments with Hanuman, who was his closest buddy, before he departed for home were extremely sorrowful, poignant and painful. Now, let us pause for a while to visualize the heart-touching scene of those few moments in the eyes of our mind as follows:

“Saying this (as narrated in Doha no. 19-a), and embracing Hanuman for one last time, Angad firmed himself for the final parting: he bit his lips, clenched his fists to collect courage, took a deep breath, and tearing himself away from his dear friend, Angad turned abruptly to go away on his long journey back home to Kishkindha, with a heavy heart, numbed mind, wet eyes, drooping head, sagging shoulders that shook intermittently as he sobbed, and virtually dragging his un-cooperating legs behind him. He didn’t look back again as Hanuman stood dumb and numb, gazing at the fading image of Angad lumbering away and gradually vanishing into the distant horizon.

After standing motionless for quite a while and feeling crestfallen, Hanuman slowly turned back himself to go back to Ayodhya and report to Lord Ram. Once back, he went straight to the Lord and told him about Angad’s deep love and intensity of affection for him, recounting Angad’s last words and the state of his mind, his anguished countenance and sorrowful demeanours, his final parting with him (Hanuman) and his painful departure, all of which so deeply moved the Lord and affected him so intensely that he lost awareness of himself and became benumbed as he heard the narrative, even though a subtle sense of ecstasy filled the Lord’s mind because he felt delighted in the reaffirmation of his belief that Angad’s devotion and love for him was deep-rooted and abiding, and not something superficial (*magana bha’ē bhagavanta*).”]² (Doha no. 19-b)

[The saintly crow Kaagbhusund, who was narrating this Story to Garud, the king of birds, told him—] ‘Oh king of birds (*khagēsa*)! Indeed it is true that Lord Ram’s heart shows two contradictory virtues which are mysterious enough for anyone to comprehend—for on one instance the Lord’s emotions (or his heart) can turn as strong, rigid and uncompromising as Bajra (which literally is the weapon of Indra, but generally applied to anything which is extremely hard and un-malleable—such as diamond or rock) (*kulisahu cāhi kaṭhōra ati*), and on another occasion it can transform into something as soft as a flower (*ati kōmala kusumahu cāhi*).’ (Doha no. 19-c)

[Note—¹Hanuman and Angad were fast friends. When Angad observed how Hanuman managed things and got his wishes—to serve Lord Ram—fulfilled, he was all praises for the latter. Now Angad must have realized his error; he regretted that he didn’t do what his friend had done—i.e. to seek permission from their king Sugriv. But it was too late now to make amends.

The two close friends came together to bid each other good-bye. Angad was choked in his throat; his eyes were misty with tears; he was doing his best to suppress his sobs; he could barely speak. He took Hanuman’s hands in his own, pressed them affectionately, looked deep into his friend’s eyes, and breathing heavily he said a few words over his sobs as follows:-

“My dearest Pal! Glory be to thee! How lucky art thou indeed! I suffer doubly from the pangs of separation—first it is from my beloved Lord Ram, and then it is from my beloved friend Hanuman. Today I feel that I am deserted and orphaned, am the most cursed of creatures in the Creator’s creation. Anyhow, be it may as it is because no one can go against the fiat of fate. However, will thou do me a favour? Promise me? Just convey to Lord Ram my last obeisance to him; tell him that—‘Angad fell down on the ground and imagined that you were standing before him; he clasped your feet and wept bitterly. Then he quietly got up, turned, and went his way sobbing.’

[Angad continued—] My dear Hanuman; later on, whenever you find Lord Ram free and alone, quietly remind him of me. You are intelligent, so find an excuse to do so. Perhaps you could start some conversation pertaining to Kishkindha or Lanka, and then mention my name innocuously. I am confident that you will observe that the Lord would become sad and pensive as he remembers me. Should this happen, I will consider myself well-born. Thank you and good-bye. Take care of yourself; remain cheerful and happy. Remember: In case you need to come to me, you are welcome warmly in Kishkindha, anytime and any day.”

²When Hanuman returned to Lord Ram, he presented a fate accompli to him, i.e. he told the Lord that he has been permitted, or rather mandated, by all the Kapis that he should stay back to serve the Lord. Now, Lord Ram had no option but to accept Hanuman and allow him to stay as long as he wished. Hanuman even told the Lord that in case he doubted him, then he could verify his claim from his three brothers who had gone to the borders to see-off the Lord’s guests from Kishkindha and Lanka, and hence were sure to have witnessed his falling at the feet of Sugriv and then all his companions unanimously telling him to keep serving the Lord. {Apropos: Chaupai line nos. 9-10 that precede Doha no. 19.}

The twin developments—of Hanuman remaining in the service of Lord Ram, and Angad being sent back to Kishkindha—had great diplomatic and political import. It meant that both the kingdoms had exchanged ambassadors: Hanuman was Sugriv’s representative in Ayodhya, and Angad was Lord Ram’s in Kishkindha. Remember: Lord Ram had adorned Angad with his personal royal robes, ornaments and garland. {Apropos: Doha no. 18-b.} This implied that Angad would be the Lord’s representative in the court of Sugriv.

Another interesting and pertinent thing to note is this: Lord Ram was too happy to keep Hanuman with him because the Lord was well aware of his abilities. Hanuman was exceptionally intelligent, wise and prudent in his mind; he was astoundingly agile, strong, powerful, bold, valiant and courageous physically; he could fly; he could, should the situation so demand, deal with an enemy single-handedly, and not only that, he could even lift his entire camp and bring it to Ayodhya.

In the same vein, Angad would be bound to remain loyal to Lord Ram as he knew that his life-time safety and security and honour were ensured only till the time the Lord had his hand over his head, for his uncle Sugriv, the king of Kishkindha, could never be his well-wisher as, first, he was the one who got his father Baali killed, and second, he was sure to harbour a secret jealousy for Angad as he saw the latter as a contender to the throne of the kingdom by the virtue of Angad being appointed a crown prince by Lord Ram.

³We have noted two opposing natures of Lord Ram which seem to contradict each other. First we notice that the Lord acts as if he is of a very stern heart when he refuses to yield to Angad’s pitiful prayers to allow him to stay in Ayodhya. Then we have also noticed how the Lord had been deeply moved and emotionally affected by Angad’s sadness and distress at not being allowed to do so. Angad’s devotion and love for Lord Ram was exemplary and deep; no one else in the whole Story of the Ramayan has wept so much when he was told that he will have to go away from the Lord. Perhaps the only other two characters that can be said to equal Angad in exhibiting their emotions for Lord Ram when told of the prospect of their separation from the Lord are Laxman and Bharat, the Lord’s two brothers.

When Lord Ram was going to the forest, Laxman had staked his life and said that he can't live without the Lord if he is not allowed to accompany him. Similarly, Bharat too was thoroughly devastated on learning that the Lord had gone to the forest. He not only sternly abused his own mother Kaikeyi for being an instrument in this development, but had refused to accept the crown, had even gone to the forest in an effort to bring the Lord back, and finally lived like a recluse for the entire period of 14 long years that Lord Ram spent in the forest attired as a hermit.

When we read the Story of the Ramayana we discover that inspite of all the most humble and pitiful prayers of Bharat asking Lord Ram to return home from the forest, the Lord did not oblige him, like he has not obliged Angad in the present case. And like Angad's case, there were sound reasons why Lord Ram did not oblige Bharat, though the reasons were different and the context was different. Like Lord Ram explaining all the aspects to Angad when he prevailed upon the latter to return to Kishkindha, he had also explained all the many aspects to his brother Bharat when he prevailed upon him to return to Ayodhya without him. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 313—to Doha no. 316.}

To wit, Lord Ram is inherently extremely loving, affectionate, soft-hearted, kind, compassionate, merciful, gracious, forgiving, magnanimous, benevolent and sweet by nature, but there are situations when he has to hold his ground, because being the Supreme Lord of the world, he has to act wisely and with prudence, and not driven by crude emotions, for he has to consider many more numbers of factors before arriving at a decision, than those who have a limited view of the world and try to judge him by his single act.

To wit, sometimes Lord Ram appears to be of a stern heart, but it is only due to compelling circumstances, for otherwise the Lord is extremely soft, friendly, compassionate, accommodating, benevolent, affable and loving.]

चौ०. पुनि कृपाल लियो बोलि निषादा । दीन्हे भूषन बसन प्रसादा ॥ १ ॥
 जाहु भवन मम सुमिरन करेहू । मन क्रम बचन धर्म अनुसरेहू ॥ २ ॥
 तुम्ह मम सखा भरत सम भ्राता । सदा रहेहु पुर आवत जाता ॥ ३ ॥
 caupāī.

puni krpāla liyō bōli niṣādā. dīnhē bhūṣana basana prasādā. 1.
 jāhu bhavana mama sumirana karēhū. mana krama bacana dharma
 anusarēhū. 2.
 tumha mama sakhā bharata sama bhrātā. sadā rahēhu pura āvata jātā. 3.

After the guests from Kishkindha and Lanka had left for their respective homes, Lord Ram called Nishad (the chief of the boatman community who was also one of the Lord's friends). The Lord gave him ornaments, robes and food items. (1)

Then Lord Ram said to Nishad, 'Now please go home and remember me. Live an honourable and good life in accordance with the laws of Dharma (righteousness, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, and nobility in conduct and thought) by all your means, such as by employing your mind, your deeds, as well as your words that would help you to comply with such norms. (2)

My dear, you are my friend as well as a brother like Bharat is¹. Keep visiting us as and when it is convenient to you².’ (3)

[Note—¹This verse can be read in another way as follows: “My dear friend! You are like a brother to me in the same way as Bharat is. So don’t hesitate to come here any time you wish.”

²This is very interesting. Nishad lived near the outer fringes of the kingdom of Ayodhya, on the banks of river Ganges. Lord Ram had met him and befriended him on his way to the forest. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 87—to Doha no. 88.}

At that time, Nishad had shown warm hospitality to the Lord, and had accompanied the Lord all the way to Chitrakoot. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede Doha no. 142.}

He had also accompanied Bharat when he was going to meet Lord Ram there. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 193—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 195; (ii) Doha no. 237 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it; and (iii) Doha no. 241 to cite some of the specific verses.}

To wit, Nishad had, by this time, established a great rapport with the whole family of Lord Ram; nay, he was like a family member. Being close to the capital city of Ayodhya, he could easily come and go. So Lord Ram invited him to pay frequent visits.

On the other hand, Lord Ram’s other friends, from Kishkindha and Lanka, lived far away. Sugriv and Vibhishan were both great kings of great kingdoms, and normally kings don’t pay visits to other kings unless it is absolutely essential; they send their ambassadors instead. Hence, it was not practically feasible to expect them to pay visits too often to Ayodhya as Nishad could do because he lived nearby, and also because he was not a king of any large kingdom but a mere chieftain of the boatman community. Therefore, there was not much of a problem in Nishad’s frequent visits to Ayodhya as compared to Sugriv and Vibhishan.]

बचन सुनत उपजा सुख भारी । परेउ चरन भरि लोचन बारी ॥ ४ ॥

चरन नलिन उर धरि गृह आवा । प्रभु सुभाउ परिजनन्हि सुनावा ॥ ५ ॥

रघुपति चरित देखि पुरबासी । पुनि पुनि कहहिं धन्य सुखरासी ॥ ६ ॥

bacana sunata upajā sukha bhārī. parē'u carana bhari lōcana bārī. 4.
carana nalina ura dhari gr̥ha āvā. prabhu subhā'u parijananhi sunāvā. 5.
raghupati carita dēkhi purabāsī. puni puni kahahim dhan'ya sukhārāsī. 6.

Hearing these pleasant words of Lord Ram, Nishad felt very delighted in his heart. He fell down at the feet of the Lord with tears filling his eyes. (4)

Then, enshrining the Lord’s lotus-like feet in his heart, Nishad came back home. He narrated all the events to his kith and kin who listened to him very affectionately. (5)

When the inhabitants of his place (i.e. the members of the boatman community of which he was the chief) heard of what Nishad had to narrate, and when they perceived

the nature of Lord Ram (as being extremely graceful, compassionate, kind, merciful, loving and friendly), they repeatedly praised the Lord and affirmed that he is indeed an embodiment of all joy and happiness, someone who grants joy, delight and happiness to everyone around him. (6)

राम राज बैठें त्रैलोका । हरषित भए गए सब सोका ॥ ७ ॥

बयरु न कर काहू सन कोई । राम प्रताप बिषमता खोई ॥ ८ ॥

rāma rāja baiṭhēm trailōkā. haraṣita bha'e ga'e saba sōkā. 7.
bayaru na kara kāhū sana kōī. rāma pratāpa biṣamatā khōī. 8.

{In the verses that follow herein below, we shall read on the excellent way Lord Ram ruled over his kingdom. His reign was marked by all-round happiness, joy, contentedness, prosperity and well-being for all. The Lord ruled judiciously, virtuously, and in accordance with the rules of Dharma—i.e. by diligently observing the principles of righteousness, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, ethics, morality, goodness of thought and conduct. The Lord ensured that all his actions, deeds and decisions were marked by the virtues of compassion, mercy, grace, benevolence, magnanimity and kindness. It was an exemplary rule that became an envy of the gods of heaven too. Its glory spread far and wide in the world, and it became famous as “Ram Rajya”, which simply put means “the excellent reign and an exemplary administration that prevailed in the great and prosperous kingdom-cum-empire of Ayodhya as it thrived and prospered during the time when Lord Ram was on the throne as its King and Emperor”. The ‘Ram Rajya’ became a role model for other virtuous kings to emulate within their own realms.}

When Lord Ram ascended the throne of Ayodhya, all the three divisions of the world and its inhabitants, known as the ‘Triloka’¹, felt extremely happy and contented to have him as their Lord. All traces of misfortune, distress, grief, torment and agony of all kinds simply vanished from existence. (7)

No one had ill-will and animosity or hostility with anyone else. By the grace of Lord Ram and his positive influence upon his subjects, disputes, hard-feelings and enmity were obliterated from the society. (8)

[Note—¹The three divisions of the world are: the heaven, the earth, and the subterranean world. To wit, during the reign of Lord Ram, everyone lived amiably; everyone practiced equality, equanimity, friendship and brotherhood. As a result, peace and tranquility prevailed everywhere; it played a dominant role in all spheres of life, without exception.]

दो०. बरनाश्रम निज निज धरम निरत बेद पथ लोग ।

चलहिं सदा पावहिं सुखहिं नहिं भय सोक न रोग ॥ २० ॥

dōhā.

baranāśrama nija nija dharama nirata bēda patha lōga.
calahim sadā pāvahim sukhahi nahim bhaya sōka na rōga. 20.

The people lived and followed the laws governing their station in life, as well as in accordance with their castes, responsibilities and duties, without any conflict or friction arising between the different sections of the society.

They obeyed the laws of conduct as prescribed in the Vedas; they revered these holy scriptures and upheld their sanctity.

By always following the righteous and auspicious path (of conduct and thought) as laid down in the Vedas, everyone found happiness and joy. There was no fear of disease of any kind¹. (Doha no. 20)

[Note—¹The word ‘disease’ here refers to the many kinds of spiritual, emotional, mental and physical problems that usually torment the creatures of the world and make them suffer interminably. Some of these diseases have been enumerated in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 70—to Doha no. 71-a; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 7, 28-37 that precede Doha no. 121—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 122.

Further, since the people lived a disciplined and orderly life, there was least chance of their falling ill, and even if some illness befell upon them then skilled medicine men who had studied the relevant sections of the Vedas would administer correct medicinal herbs to the patient which not only cured them but had no reactions like modern-day medicines based on chemicals do. Again, since there was brotherhood and friendly atmosphere everywhere, there was no fear from an enemy, as none existed. Since there was all-round prosperity and abundance, there was no fear from thieves too, as no one had dearth of anything in Lord Ram’s reign, and so there was no need to steal something from others.

It was in a way a Utopian society, the like of which was never seen since the days of Lord Ram. The people lived a very happy and contented life—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 26.

The glorious reign of Lord Ram has also been described by Tulsidas in (a) Dohawali, verse nos. 182-186; (b) Geetawali Ramayan, Uttar Kand, verse nos. 1 and 24.]

चौ०. दैहिक दैविक भौतिक तापा । राम राज नहिं काहुहि व्यापा ॥ १ ॥

सब नर करहिं परस्पर प्रीती । चलहिं स्वधर्म निरत श्रुति नीती ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

daihika daivika bhautika tāpā. rāma rāja nahim kāhuhi byāpā. 1.

saba nara karahim paraspara prīti. calahim svadharma nirata śruti nīti. 2.

No one suffered afflictions of any kind; they were not tormented by the three types of sufferings that usually cause immense agony and pain to all living beings. These three types of torments are called ‘Daihik’—i.e. untold sufferings caused by different kinds of ailments and deformities of a creature’s body; ‘Daivik’—i.e. sufferings due to supernatural elements, and inimical gods and stars; and ‘Bhautik’—i.e. sufferings caused by physical factors on earth, such as famine, drought, earthquakes, epidemics

and other natural calamities, as well as attack by enemies, wild animals and insects that cause interminable fear, and ruin one's peace of mind.

All such torments and sufferings and causes of grief and pain did not exist during the reign of Lord Ram. (1)

All the subjects in Lord Ram's realm loved and respected each other; they treated everyone equally and in a friendly manner, interacting with each other amiably, and with an attitude of brotherhood. There was an all-encompassing environment of goodwill, and people followed the laws of conduct prescribed for them by the Vedas in accordance with their station in life, their vocation or profession, and the segment of the society they belonged to. (2)

चारिउ चरन धर्म जग माहीं । पूरि रहा सपनेहुँ अघ नाहीं ॥ ३ ॥

राम भगति रत नर अरु नारी । सकल परम गति के अधिकारी ॥ ४ ॥

cāri'u carana dharma jaga māhīm. pūri rahā sapanēhum' agha nāhīm. 3.
rāma bhagati rata nara aru nārī. sakala parama gati kē adhikārī. 4.

Dharma (principles of auspiciousness, righteousness, probity, propriety, ethics, morality, goodness of thought and conduct) with its four pillars of Truth, Purity, Compassion and Charity ruled everywhere; no one even dreamt of doing anything that would come within the ambit of sins and vices. (3)

Men and women worshipped Ram faithfully and with greatest of devotion, thereby entitling them to attain the highest reward that a living being can expect to have during one's life in this world, which is to attain liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation; this granted the souls of all the subjects of Lord Ram eternal contentedness, peace, bliss, felicity and beatitude (parama gati). (4)

अल्पमृत्यु नहिं कवनिउ पीरा । सब सुंदर सब बिरुज सरीरा ॥ ५ ॥

नहिं दरिद्र कोउ दुखी न दीना । नहिं कोउ अबुध न लच्छन हीना ॥ ६ ॥

alpamṛtyu nahīm kavani'u pīrā. saba sundara saba biruja sarīrā. 5.
nahīm daridra kō'u dukhī na dīnā. nahīm kō'u abudha na lacchana hīnā. 6.

There was no pre-mature death or suffering of any kind; all were healthy and cheerful; their character, deeds, actions, behaviour and thoughts were all righteous and auspicious. (5)

There was no dearth of anything, nor was there any hint of poverty. No one suffered from grief, pain and agony, and neither was there anyone who could be called a destitute, or was sad, distressed and miserable. [To wit, everyone was well-provided for; there were no poor people, or beggars and destitutes.] (6).

सब निर्दम्भ धर्मरत पुनी । नर अरु नारि चतुर सब गुनी ॥ ७ ॥
 सब गुनग्य पंडित सब ग्यानी । सब कृतग्य नहिं कपट सयानी ॥ ८ ॥

saba nirdambha dharmarata punī. nara aru nāri catura saba gunī. 7.
 saba gunagya paṇḍita saba gyānī. saba kṛtagya nahim kapaṭa sayānī. 8.

All the people were virtuous and upright; they were free from the negative traits of deceit, conceit and pretensions.

All men and women were skilled in their respective fields of engagements in life; all had excellent characters and qualities. (7)

Everyone was wise, virtuous, pious, learned, clever, talented and meritorious. All the people were accomplished, and they led a contented life. There was no trace of deceit, conceit, falsehood, corruption and lies to be found anywhere. [To wit, every single person was honest and upright; they lived a happy and contented life. Everyone was qualified to fulfill his obligations, and well-trained to do their duties in a professional manner.] (8)

दो०. राम राज नभगेस सुनु सचराचर जग माहिं ।
 काल कर्म सुभाव गुन कृत दुख काहुहि नाहिं ॥ २१ ॥

dōhā.

rāma rāja nabhagēsa sunu sacarācara jaga māhim.
 kāla karma subhāva guna kṛta dukha kāhuhi nāhim. 21.

The saintly crow Kaagbhusund continued: ‘Listen oh Garud, the king of birds (nabhagēsa). During the reign of Lord Ram, there wasn’t a single creature in this world, either animate or inanimate, who would be liable to suffer due to any of the factors related to time (such as good times and bad times; good fortunes and misfortunes), deeds (done in the past and those done during the present time), habits, temperaments, qualities or characters that normally create a lot of problems for ordinary creatures in this world¹. (Doha no. 21)

[Note—¹To wit, no one suffered in any way during the reign of Lord Ram. Why didn’t they suffer? The foregoing verses which we have read herein above amply summarise the reasons why everyone was happy and free from all kinds of sufferings, grief, pains and torments. We have read that no one was sinful; no one had vices; everyone followed the rule of law and conduct as laid down by the Vedas; all lived a friendly and contented life, treating others with respect and an attitude of brotherhood. These factors ensured all-round peace and tranquility.

The verses that follow herein below also outline the reasons why no one suffered.]

चौ०. भूमि सप्त सागर मेखला । एक भूप रघुपति कोसला ॥ १ ॥
 भुअन अनेक रोम प्रति जासू । यह प्रभुता कछु बहुत न तासू ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

bhūmi sapta sāgara mēkhalā. ēka bhūpa raghupati kōsalā. 1.
bhu'ana anēka rōma prati jāsū. yaha prabhutā kachu bahuta na tāsū. 2.

Lord Ram, the sovereign of Kaushal (another name for Ayodhya), was the undisputed Lord of the entire earth (globe) girdled on all the sides by the seven oceans¹.

There is no surprise of wonder in this majestic view and the supremacy of Lord Ram as being the only sovereign of the world, because the Lord was none other than the Supreme Father of this creation known as the 'Viraat Purush', the macrocosmic form of the Supreme Being that has countless Universes as mere hairs on his cosmic body².
(2)

[Note—¹This verse shows that Tulsidas had good knowledge of geography, as we know that there are indeed seven oceans surrounding the land mass on earth. These seven oceans are: the North and South Pacific Oceans, the North and South Atlantic Oceans, the Indian Ocean, the Artic Ocean, and the Antarctic Ocean.

Lord Ram was a King of the kingdom of Ayodhya, as well as an Emperor of the entire world that covered the land mass of the earth—i.e. the continents and islands, small and big, that were surrounded by all these seven oceans.

²The earth is but a dot on the cosmic scale of things, for there are many suns with their own planetary systems in this creation, with our own sun and our earth and its companion planets being one of them.

The cosmic and all-encompassing form of Lord Ram has also been described elsewhere in Ram Charit Manas, viz. (a) Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 242 (how Lord Ram was viewed by wise men in Janakpur); (b) Aranya Kand, (ii) Chaupai line nos. 17-18 that precede Doha no. 11 (sage Sutikshan); (iii) Chaupai line nos. 5-9 that precede Doha no. 13 (sage Agastya), (c) Lanka Kand, (iv) Doha no. 14—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 15 (Lord Ram's cosmic form described by Mandodari); and (d) Uttar Kand, (v) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 80—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 82 (Lord Ram's cosmic form described Kaagbhusund).

So definitely there is no surprise or wonder that Lord Ram would rule over the entire earth which is but a small globule in the context of the cosmos over which the Lord rules as its only Lord Emperor and Sovereign.]

सो महिमा समुज्जत प्रभु केरी । यह बरनत हीनता घनेरी ॥ ३ ॥
सोउ महिमा खगेस जिन्ह जानी । फिरि एहिं चरित तिन्हहुँ रति मानी ॥ ४ ॥
सोउ जाने कर फल यह लीला । कहहिं महा मुनिबर दमसीला ॥ ५ ॥

sō mahimā samujhata prabhu kērī. yaha baranata hīnatā ghanērī. 3.
sō'u mahimā khagēsa jinha jānī. phiri ēhiṁ carita tinahum' rati mānī. 4.
sō'u jānē kara phala yaha līlā. kahahirṁ mahā munibara damasilā. 5.

When one realizes that Lord Ram is the Supreme Father of this creation who has a cosmic, infinite, all-encompassing and colossus form in which countless Universes are mere hairs on his cosmic body, it seems like disparaging the Lord's majesty and greatness by saying that he was the Lord of a small fraction of that cosmos over which he rules as its only Sovereign, because the earth is a mere speck in the vast and the infinite realm that constitutes this creation¹. (3)

[In the following verse, Kaagbhusund clarifies to Garud why he has chosen to stress this point about Lord Ram being the Lord of the whole earth inspite of knowing that this reference is insulting for Lord Ram's true form and identity as being the Supreme Being, the Lord of this creation who has a cosmic presence known as the 'Viraat Purush' who is the Lord of the entire creation of which earth is a mere dot-like fraction, and which he, Kaagbhusund, has himself observed at one point of time in his life².]

'Listen Garud', oh king of birds (*khagēsa*)! Inspite of knowing the greatness of Lord Ram and his majesty as being the Lord of the entire creation and its Supreme Father who has a cosmic existence, yet those who are devoted to Lord Ram and wish to establish a personal bond with him on a more practical plane of life in this world, so that they can directly relate to him, invoke his grace and blessings and worship his divine form that is easier to conceive and understand so as to enable such devotees to sing and narrate the Lord's glories so that not only they but even others who listen to them can derive immense spiritual peace, joy, happiness and bliss—it is due to this reason that wise, learned and devoted people like saints, sages and other pious souls choose to invoke the glory of Lord Ram at a more humble level of existence as the King of Ayodhya and an Emperor of this earth surrounded by the seven oceans³. (4)

Even self-realised, enlightened and wise sages who have access to knowledge pertaining to the Lord's cosmic form and can as easily meditate on that form, yet they affirm that it is more convenient and easy for them to relate to the Lord's visible form as the King-Emperor of Ayodhya and the earth. It helps them to offer their prayers to Lord Ram more easily, more conveniently, and at a more personal level.

For this purpose they choose to sing, narrate and listen to the Story of Lord Ram that describes the Lord's time as well as the deeds done by him during his sojourn on earth as its Emperor and King⁴. (5)

[Note—¹The earth is like a mere 'dot' on the huge canvas of this creation, and obviously there would be countless or an infinite numbers of such dots in that canvas. Hence, if the entire canvas belongs to Lord Ram as he is a King of his realm, it obviously seems rude and impolite to limit his majesty and glory to some specific dot on the vast canvas and say that 'this dot belongs to Lord Ram, and that none others belong to him', or that 'Lord Ram has sway over one dot only out of the endless numbers of dots present on the canvas' because the entire canvas belongs to the Lord, the King-Emperor of his realm.

²Refer to: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 80—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 82.

³To wit, since devotees of Lord Ram find it easier and convenient to worship the Lord in his human form which they can comfortably identify, and with which they are able

to relate more easily, as compared to the Lord's cosmic form which defies understanding as well is very difficult to conceive by ordinary creatures with limited intellectual reach and wisdom that are necessary for it, the devotees prefer instead to focus their attention on the manifested form of Lord Ram as the King-Emperor of Ayodhya whose reign covered the whole earth, till the time when the Lord returned to heaven to resume his original cosmic form as the Viraat Purush, also known as Lord Vishnu. It is not at all meant to undermine the Lord's supremacy or his cosmic glory, but is adopted merely as a convenient tool for worship, devotion and seeking nearness with their beloved Lord at a more practical and personal level of existence in this world.

In this context, refer to what sage Valmiki told Lord Ram in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Sortha no. 126—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 127.

⁴We have examples where great sages have pleaded with Lord Ram to bless them with the ability to worship and praise the Lord's 'Suguna form', i.e. a form that is visible, a form that is convenient to view and relate to, a form whose attributes, virtues and characters are easy to understand, and with which one can establish a bond or relationship at a personal level. Singing, narrating and listening to the divine Story of Lord Ram is one simple and convenient way to attain eternal peace, joy, happiness and bliss, both at the level of the heart and mind, as well as the spiritual level. In this context, refer to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Ayodhya Kand, (i) Doha no. 107 along with Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes it (sage Bharadwaj); (b) Aranya Kand, (ii) Doha and Sortha no. 6 along with Chaupai line nos. 4-10 that precede it (sage Atri); (iii) Doha no. 11 along with Chaupai line nos. 17-21 that precede it (sage Sutikshan); (iv) Chaupai line nos. 10-13 that precede Doha no. 13 (sage Agastya).

Even the gods have shown preference to worshipping the 'Suguna form' of Lord Ram as will be evident in Ram Charit Manas, (a) Lanka Kand, (i) Chanda line nos. 13-20 that precede Doha no. 113 (prayer by Indra, the king of gods) (ii) Chanda line nos. 3-8 that precede Doha no. 115 (prayer of Lord Shiva); (b) Uttar Kand, (iii) Chanda line nos. 17-24 that precede Doha no. 13 (prayer by the Vedas); (iv) Doha no. 14 along with Chanda line nos. 9-20 that precede it (Lord Shiva's prayer).]

राम राज कर सुख संपदा । बरनि न सकइ फनीस सारदा ॥ ६ ॥

सब उदार सब पर उपकारी । बिप्र चरन सेवक नर नारी ॥ ७ ॥

एकनारि ब्रत रत सब झारी । ते मन बच क्रम पति हितकारी ॥ ८ ॥

rāma rāja kara sukha sampadā. barani na saka'i phanīsa sārādā. 6.
saba udāra saba para upakārī. bipra carana sēvaka nara nārī. 7.
ēkanāri brata rata saba jhārī. tē mana baca krama pati hitakārī. 8.

[Continuing with his description of the exemplary reign of Lord Ram, the pious Kaagbhusund told Garud—]

'Even the Serpent-God (known as Lord Sheshnath) and the Goddess of learning (known as Saraswati) can't fully describe the happiness, prosperity, all-round joy, and

the goodness that prevailed everywhere and were the hallmark of Lord Ram's reign. (6)

All people were generous and benevolent like their Lord. They respected the learned and elderly members of the society known as the Brahmins. (7)

There was universal observance of the principle of monogamy amongst the men, and the wives too were devoted and loyal to their respective husbands in their words, deeds and thoughts. (8)

[Note—To wit, the society was disciplined and self-regulated; everyone lived in accordance to the standard principles of auspiciousness, righteousness, probity, propriety, ethics, morality, and goodness of thought and deeds. There was not a single case of violation of these principles of good conduct.]

दो०. दंड जतिन्ह कर भेद जहँ नर्तक नृत्य समाज ।
जीतहु मनहि सुनिअ अस रामचंद्र केँ राज ॥ २२ ॥

dōhā.

daṇḍa jatinha kara bhēda jaham' nartaka nṛtya samāja.
jītaḥu manahi suni'a asa rāmacandra kēm rāja. 22.

'Danda' (a stick, a cane) was seen only in the hands of ascetics and monks (as their trademark symbol known as an ascetic's or a monk's "staff" which such people are obliged to carry with them as one of the visible signs that would distinguish them from others in the society, and to honour them for pursuing a spiritual path by renouncing their attachment with the material world).

[To wit, the 'stick' was never used to punish, harm, threaten or cause injury to anyone. It was held only by ascetics and monks

During the reign of Lord Ram, the element of 'Bheda' (meaning to differentiate between, to have differences in opinion, and have conflicting, contradictory or divergent views regarding two or more things, individuals or groups in any given set of situations or circumstances, while judging them for their respective qualities, virtues, characters, skills, wisdom, intelligence, skills and other such characteristics found in them which may cause conflict and a mutual sense of jealousy, rift, animosity, ill-will amongst the concerned people, because one is given merit and seniority over the other that are based on the judge's personal preferences, criteria and perceptions which may vary from person to person, and may even be wrong or erroneous) was used only to judge performances of artists and players during dance parties and intellectual debates.

[To wit, differences of opinion expressed by spectators and audiences regarding the quality and merit of performance by artists performing on stage as well as those participating in intellectual debates, were done only with a constructive attitude, and not to criticize, insult, humiliate or ridicule anyone. Hence, dissenting or contradicting views, and differences in opinions regarding two or more individuals and groups were never used to create any kind of rift or ill-will or animosity in the society, or become a cause to ignite a quarrel or create any kind of dispute between two or more individuals.]

Similarly, the word 'Conquer' was used only with reference to the mind, thought, and the sense organs of an individual, and not against other societies, kingdoms or lands.

[To wit, the word 'conquer' was used only in a positive way while talking about vanquishing one's passions and desires, as well as the need to keep one's mind, thought and sense organs under control to prevent them from going wayward and out-of-hand. But this word was never used in the context of wars and intimidation of other people, or about usurping their kingdoms and lands.]

Verily indeed and in all sooth, such was the singularly excellent, exemplary and auspicious nature of Lord Ram's rule that the words that generally have a negative connotation and are usually applied to lowly and sinful behaviour, were invariably used instead to mean positive things and high standards of life lived by the people during the reign of Lord Ram as narrated herein above. (Doha no. 22)

चौ०. फूलहिं फरहिं सदा तरु कानन । रहहिं एक सँग गज पंचानन ॥ १ ॥

खग मृग सहज बयरु बिसराई । सबहिं परस्पर प्रीति बढ़ाई ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

phūlahim pharahim sadā taru kānana. rahahim ēka saṁga gaja pañcānana. 1. khaga mṛga sahaja bayaru bisarāī. sabanhi paraspara prīti barhāī. 2.

Forests and gardens had an abundance of ever-green trees that bore fruits and flowers throughout the year¹.

The lion and the elephant lived in harmony together as friends (though they are naturally inimical to each other)². (1)

Even the birds and the beasts of all description and segments of the zoological kingdom had forgotten their inherent animosities, and had developed goodwill and friendliness towards each other³. (2)

[Note—¹Regarding 'trees', refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 5-7 that precede Doha no. 137 (at Chitrakoot); (b) Aranya Kand, (ii) Chaupai line nos. 6-7 that precede Doha no. 40 (at Pampa lake); (c) Kishkindha Kand, (iii) Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 13 (at Mt. Prabarshan).

²Regarding 'animals living amiably', refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 138 (at Chitrakoot); (b) Kishkindha Kand, (ii) Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 15 (at Mt. Prabarshan).

³Regarding 'birds and beasts living in a friendly way', refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Aranya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 14 (at Panchavati); (b) Kishkindha Kand, (ii) Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 15.]

कूजहिं खग मृग नाना बृंदा । अभय चरहिं बन करहिं अनंदा ॥ ३ ॥

सीतल सुरभि पवन बह मंदा । गुंजत अलि लै चलि मकरंदा ॥ ४ ॥

kūjahim̐ khaga mṛga nānā bṛndā. abhaya carahim̐ bana karahim̐ anandā. 3.
sītala surabhi pavana baha mandā. guṇjata ali lai cali makarandā. 4.

The birds of all varieties sang merrily, and the animals of all sorts too moved about freely, fearlessly and cheerfully in the forest. They enjoyed life and made merry of their time living in an environment marked by fearlessness, peace, joy and abundance of everything¹. (3)

The air was soft, cool and fragrant²; honey bees laden with honey buzzed around merrily from one place to another³. (4)

[Note—¹Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 137 (at Chitrakoot); (b) Aranya Kand, (iii) Chaupai line nos. 5-9 that precede Doha no. 38; (enroute to lake Pampa lake); (iii) Chaupai line nos. 2-4, 9 that precede Doha no. 40 (at Pampa lake).

²Refer also to a similar narration in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 10 that precedes Doha no. 38; (ii) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 40 (at Pampa lake).

³Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Aranya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 14 (at Panchavati); (b) Kishkindha Kand, (ii) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 17 (at Mt. Prabarshan).]

लता बिटप मागें मधु चवहीं । मनभावतो धेनु पय स्रवहीं ॥ ५ ॥
ससि संपन्न सदा रह धरनी । त्रेताँ भइ कृतजुग कै करनी ॥ ६ ॥

latā biṭapa māgēm̐ madhu cavahim̐. manabhāvatō dhēnu paya sravahim̐. 5.
sasi sampanna sadā raha dharanī. trētāṁ bha'i kṛtajuga kai karanī. 6.

Creepers and trees oozed a sweet honey-like sap and dropped it whenever someone wanted to have it for refreshment¹. Cows yielded abundant milk, and their udders too were always filled with this nourishing liquid. (5)

The earth was covered with high-yielding crops, giving the impression that it was the Utopian age of abundance with full granaries² that prevailed during the Sata-Yuga (which was the first of the four-era one cycle of creation and destruction), in spite of the fact that it was a Treta-Yuga (i.e. the second era of this cycle)³. (6)

[Note—¹Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 137 (at Chitrakoot); (b) Aranya Kand, (ii) Doha no. 40 (at Pampa lake).

²Refer also to: Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 15 (at Mt. Prabarshan).

³According to the scriptures, a one-cycle of creation and destruction of this world has been divided in four segments—viz. Sata Yuga, Treta Yuga, Dwapar Yuga, and the last is the Kali Yuga. All the good and exemplary virtues that came under the overall umbrella of ‘Dharma’, and were widely cherished and practiced, made the society a commendable and a Utopian place to live as they were at their highest point during Sata Yuga. Then, as time passed, these glorious coming under the definition of Dharma progressively began to decline and get diluted, and slowly but surely were overcome or eclipsed by the countless negative traits such as sins, corruption, perversion, deceit, conceit, falsehood, selfishness etc. that began to have a dominant role in the society. By-and-by, the erosion was more marked in the third era called Dwapar, and finally they touched a Nadir during the last era known as Kali Yuga, which itself means the ‘dark (Kali =black) era’.

Lord Ram manifested himself in Treta Yuga, while Lord Krishna did so in the Dwapar Yuga.

The names of these four Yugas would speak for themselves if we visualize them as four divisions or quarters of a giant Wheel of Time as described below:

(i) In the first era, the Sata Yuga, the element of ‘truth, auspiciousness and righteousness’ covered the entire circle or the giant wheel.

(ii) As time elapsed and the celestial Wheel of Time turned or rotated slowly, we arrived at the second quarter of this giant wheel, which was called the Treta Yuga. The word ‘Treta’ means ‘three’, i.e. in this quarter, the elements of Dharma were present only in the three-quarter area, leaving the rest of the space, i.e. the one-fourth part of the whole, to other characters, usually negative and opposite of Dharma. These negative traits gradually began to make their presence felt in a subtle manner, creeping in slowly and gradually corrupting the entire fabric of Dharma so as to fill the gap of one-quarter of the remaining space from where Dharma withdrew.

(iii) Further down the line, Dharma retracted to cover only ‘two quarters’ of the four divisions of the celestial Wheel of Time. This was the era of Dwapar Yuga, because the word ‘Dwapar’ refers to ‘two’, i.e. to ‘two quarters’ of a four-quarter giant circle. As noted in the case of Treta Yuga, Dharma was slowly on the decline, with it leaving a half of the circle to negative traits because it was too much for Dharma to fight evil and unscrupulous elements as it never deviated from its right path and used cunning to subdue its adversaries or opponents.

(iv) This good nature of Dharma, that it preferred to keep quiet and maintain a distance from evil and bad elements in order to preserve its purity and sanctity, were, unfortunately, exploited to the hilt by corrupting influences of Maya (delusions), resulting in Dharma gradually withdrawing further. Since Dharma stood of ‘light’ and ‘enlightenment’, it obviously means that its gradual withdrawal led to ‘darkness’, i.e. the age of Kali Yuga, the ‘dark era’ where Dharma gradually ceased to exist, and the space left vacant by it was immediately encroached upon by all sorts of negative traits one can imagine. These negative traits have been briefly enumerated in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 70—to Doha no. 71-a.

It ought to be noted at this juncture that characteristics of Sata Yuga and Treta Yuga have been briefly referred to by Kaagbhushund in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 103 in order to clearly differentiate between these two eras.]

प्रगटीं गिरिन्ह बिबिधि मनि खानी । जगदातमा भूप जग जानी ॥ ७ ॥
सरिता सकल बहहिं बर बारी । सीतल अमल स्वाद सुखकारी ॥ ८ ॥

pragaṭīm girinha bibidhi mani khānī. jagadātamā bhūpa jaga jānī. 7.
saritā sakala bahahim bara bārī. sītala amala svāda sukhakārī. 8.

The mountains revealed an abundance of natural treasures, such as herbs, minerals and precious stones (with the medicinal herbs filling the surrounding environment with colour and a pleasant aroma, and the many minerals and precious stones glittering under the rays of the sun like thousands of diamonds during the day-time, while during the night they would twinkle with a dazzling radiance like countless glow-worms that had wedged themselves on the sides of the majestic mountains).

The patron deities of all such natural wealth wished to express their joy by having Lord Ram, the Lord of the entire creation, in their midst¹. (7)

All the rivers had cool, clean, sweet water that was tasty to drink². (8)

[Note—¹Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 132 (sage Valmiki); (ii) Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 138 (at Chitrakoot).

²Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 132 (sage Valmiki); (ii) Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede Doha no. 138 (at Chitrakoot); (b) Aranya Kand, (iii) Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 39 (at Pampa lake).]

सागर निज मरजादाँ रहहीं । डारहिं रत्न तटन्हि नर लहहीं ॥ ९ ॥
सरसिज संकुल सकल तड़ागा । अति प्रसन्न दस दिसा बिभागा ॥ १० ॥

sāgara nija marajādām̐ rahahīm. ḍārahīm ratna taṭanhi nara lahahīm. 9.
sarasija saṅkula sakala taṭāgā. ati prasanna dasa disā bibhāgā. 10.

The mighty oceans kept within their bounds, and instead of causing devastation and havoc on the land near its borders by trespassing its natural limits, it instead liberally scattered jewels that were in its treasury (such as shells, pearls, corals, sea-food etc.) on the land around it (i.e. on the countless miles of shores that touched it) so that men could get them for free. [These jewels belonged to the deity of the ocean, and were sent by him to the subjects of Lord Ram as his humble tribute to the Lord who was the Emperor of the world where the ocean existed.]¹. (9)

Ponds everywhere were filled with clean water and covered with an abundance of lotus flowers.

There was a wide-spread and an all-pervading sense of well-being and contentedness, with an abundance of cheer, happiness and joy, in all the ten directions of the celestial globe². (10)

[Note—¹We have read earlier that when the deity of the ocean stood stubbornly before Lord Ram and his mighty army, preventing them to go across to Lanka, the Lord had first tried to use polite means to pray to the deity of the ocean to let them go peacefully. But the dumb-witted, lowly and haughty ocean had underestimated the power and might of Lord Ram, thinking stupidly that only a weak person would beg and pray for favour and mercy from someone who is greater and mightier in comparison to him in order to accomplish his aim. Soon the Lord decided to teach the ocean a lesson, and he asked Laxman to bring his bow and arrow, and he would dry up the entire ocean by a single shot of a fiery arrow. Shocked beyond measure and finding that its very existence was at stake, the deity of the ocean panicked, and it rushed to ask for forgiveness from Lord Ram and promised to help in all possible way to cross the water to the other side to Lanka. At that time too, the deity of the ocean had brought a big plate full of the jewels of the ocean as a gift to Lord Ram. The merciful, gracious and forgiving Lord Ram not only forgave the deity of the ocean but also obliged the deity by eliminating certain threats that it faced from its northern borders. This episode is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 57—to Chanda line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 60.

But this incident happened when Lord Ram was leading a humble life in the forest like that of a hermit or recluse; it was a thing of the past now. Presently, the Lord was an Emperor of the whole earth—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 22.

All kings, lords, knights and noble men in the world would regularly come to offer their respects to Lord Ram and seek his blessings, bringing along with them the best gifts they could think of from the area under their lordship—and the deity of the ocean was no exception.

²The ‘ten directions’ of the celestial globe are the following: North (Uttar), North-East (Ishan), East (Purva), South-East (Agneya), South (Dakshin), South-West (Nairitya), West (Paschim), North-West (Vayabya), Zenith (Akash), and Nadir (Patal).

Not only on the earth, but even in the heavens and the lower world too there was wide-spread and all-pervading happiness and joy during the reign of Lord Ram.]

दो०. बिधु महि पूर मयूखन्हि रबि तप जेतनेहि काज ।

मार्गे बारिद देहिं जल रामचंद्र के राज ॥ २३ ॥

dōhā.

bidhu mahi pūra mayūkhanhi rabi tapa jētanēhi kāja.

māgēm bārīda dēhīm jala rāmacandra kēm rāja. 23.

During the glorious reign of Lord Ram, the moon spread its cool and soothing rays to cover the surface of the whole earth evenly (so as to keep it cool and give comfort to the Lord’s subjects), while the sun shined in a regulated manner to spread its light and warmth only as much as was needed¹.

The clouds too contributed to serve Lord Ram and keep the people happy by showering rain in a regulated manner, irrigating and cooling the earth, filling water bodies, and keeping the underground water levels to an optimum mark².* (Doha no. 23)

[Note—¹To wit, the moon and the sun acted in tandem and cooperated with each other to serve Lord Ram. During the day, the sun ensured that its heat would not scorch the earth and torment anyone, and its rays would illuminate the earth in a well-regulated clockwork precision, never plunging the whole earth in darkness at any given point of time. The sun rose softly, slowly glided across the firmament, and politely set at its designated time to allow the people to wake up from their sleep and work during the day in a properly maintained rhythm.

The moon rose as soon as the sun set so that the earth and its inhabitants could find comfort and time to rest under its soothing and cool rays. The rays of the moon prevented the earth from plunging into complete darkness like the one observed inside deep caves. Even in the absence of the bright light of the sun, the earth was still kept illuminated by a soft and cool glow because of the moonlight. Above in the sky, the moon hung like a night-lamp which we all use in our homes during the night to keep the house softly illuminated.

During the daytime, our offices and homes are well-illuminated, but when we go to bed during the night, we switch off all unnecessary lights but keep one small bulb on so as to keep the home illuminated instead of being plunged into complete darkness.

This exactly was the role the sun and the moon played respectively.

²There was neither too much nor too less rainfall. There was no drought, and neither the fear of floods and inundation. Rain fell and only to the extent that was needed, such as during the crop season. Heavy rainfall never caused havoc, and neither shortage of rain led to famine.

In its effort to serve Lord Ram, the cloud was helped by the sun and the moon. The sun ensured that the yearly cycle of seasons kept on moving smoothly, and that its heat would generate the clouds at their proper time. Then the sun allowed the clouds to drop their rains without getting evaporated midway by the heat of the sun's rays. The moon contributed by cooling the water bodies during the night.

Their acting together and in a friendly manner helped the farmer to cultivate his land, and get a rich harvest, without the fear of his standing crop dying because of excessive heat or unexpected heavy rainfall.

*The glorious reign of Lord Ram has also been described briefly in Veda Vyas' "Adhyatma Ramayan", Uttar Kand, Canto 4, verse nos. 20-29.]

चौ०. कोटिन्ह बाजिमेध प्रभु कीन्हे । दान अनेक द्विजन्ह कहँ दीन्हे ॥ १ ॥

श्रुति पथ पालक धर्म धुरंधर । गुनातीत अरु भोग पुरंदर ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

kōṭinha bājimēdha prabhu kīnhē. dāna anēka dvijanha kaham̐ dīnhē. 1.
śruti patha pālaka dharma dhurandhara. gunātīta aru bhōga purandara. 2.

Lord Ram performed countless horse sacrifices during his reign¹, and gave liberal gifts and largesse to Brahmins and other alms-seekers. (1)

The Lord always followed the path shown by the Vedas (scriptures), and was an ardent defender of Vedic principles and precepts (śruti patha pālaka).

At the same time, Lord Ram was an expert in the laws and principles pertaining to Dharma (**dharma dhurandhara**), and was a champion upholder of these laws (i.e. laws governing righteousness, propriety, probity, ethics, morality, and goodness of thoughts and deeds) in all spheres of life.

The Lord was above the influences of any Gunas³, and he remained upright and neutral under all circumstances (**gunātīta**).

[To wit, his responses to any given situation were determined by the tenets of the Vedas and Dharma, and not by the influence of any personal habits or self-interest, or by personal likes or dislikes, or by some other character traits, thought processes or emotions that might be said to have conditioned his mind to think and analyse the situation in a particular way. He practiced high standards of the virtues of equanimity, dispassion, detachment and renunciation in every sphere of his life. He treated all creatures equally, with compassion, kindness, mercy, grace and benevolence. He would not punish a poor and humble man to favour a rich and powerful person.]

On the other hand, he led a very comfortable life and enjoyed all royal pleasures offered by the material things of this world as the king of gods Indra does (**bhōga purandara**). (2)

[Note—¹The word used in the text for the number of horse sacrifices that Lord Ram performed is “**kōṭinḥa**”, which literally would mean hundreds and thousands, but in practical terms it simply means that he performed so many horse sacrifices that one cannot count them.

The ‘Horse Sacrifice’ (**bājimēdha**): It is also known as an “Ashwamedha Yagya” (‘Ashwa’ = horse; ‘medha’ = to kill an animal as an offering during some ancient rituals; ‘Yagya’ = fire sacrifice).

It was done by great emperors to establish their authority not only over their own realms but even extend it further to cover new territories. It is called a ‘horse sacrifice’ because a horse was sacrificed during elaborate rituals held to mark the end of a successful campaign of the emperor to establish his unchallenged and undisputed sway over vast territories. It is one of the most ancient forms of sacrifices, and can only be successfully done by very powerful kings and emperors.

The sacrificial horse was set free to go anywhere it wants for one year, and the land where it set foot was annexed either by peaceful treaties or by the force war. Majority of the rulers through whose domain the horse passed would prefer to avoid a devastating war and complete ruin, so they easily bowed down. Such kings who were willing to submit before the emperor and accept his authority, would welcome the horse and let it pass through their kingdoms, while at the same time send their ministers to the emperor with gifts and messages of acceptance of his sovereignty, and a commitment to send regular tributes to emperor’s court. As the horse moved on, these subdued kings, knights and chieftains would send their own troops with the horse as a gesture of their support to the emperor.

The sacrificial horse was given protection by the huge army of the emperor who was performing the horse sacrifice. If any king refused to be cowed down by the threat of war and annihilation, and held the progress of the horse through his territory, then a ferocious battle took place in which the king who opposed the movement of the horse would generally be either killed, or captured, tied in shackles, and send to the emperor as a trophy.

In case the horse got killed during the conflict or for any other reason, then the ‘horse sacrifice’ was deemed to be defiled. This would infuriate the emperor who

would then lead a personal campaign at the head of a huge army to his enemy's lands, and use the full brutal force and might of his power to lay waste the opponent king's realms.

In case the horse died due to some other reason than a battle with an opposing king, then the entire detachment of the army, with its soldiers and commanders as well as those responsible for the protection of the horse, were put to the sword.

Death of a sacrificial horse before the end a successful campaign indicated an evil omen for the emperor, so he would do large-scale penances and perform all sorts of charities and other religious deeds, along with engaging priests to perform elaborate rituals, in order to deflect the negative influences of malignant stars. Till the time of the next successful completion of another horse sacrifice, this emperor would remain under constant mental distress and fear of a disaster befalling him and his empire, especially the prospect of defeat in case of an attack by another powerful ruler.

In practical terms, in ancient times it was a means to spread an emperor's area of influence, as well as to declare to the rest of the world that he is the greatest and most powerful ruler on earth, that he holds an unchallenged sway over vast tracts of the earth, and that no one dare challenge his authority, power and sovereignty. The mightier the emperor was, the more numbers of horse sacrifices he would do.

The actual sacrifice of the horse was done during a ritual that lasted for approximately three days at the end of the campaign.

²The 3 Gunas—The character of all the living beings in the entire creation is dependent upon three celebrated primary qualities called the Gunas. They are Sata, Raja and Tama.

(a) The *Sata Guna* is the best of the three qualities present in any creature. It is a positive quality and is marked by a propensity for following the path of nobility, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, virtuousness, holiness and righteousness. Creatures that have a predominance of Sata Guna are inclined to do selfless service, be benevolent, merciful, kind and gracious, have coolness of head and a rationale and balanced mind, be contented, have humility and piety etc. Such creatures are devoted to good values in life and have a desire to acquire knowledge that would help them reach higher spiritual goals in life.

This Sata Guna is marked by high standards of ethical and moral existence that makes the bearer of such qualities highly respected in society. Such people have a spiritual dimension to their personality. This quality is spiritually uplifting and gives a divine halo to those who possess it and practice it.

The Vasanas that have the Sata Guna or quality dominant in them are like a veil covering the lamp or like a smoke covering the fire. A slight breeze will remove this smoke. Similarly a little bit of prayer and meditation will remove the Satwic desires; its removal requires the least effort.

(b) The second quality is the *Raja Guna* and it makes a man more attracted to this material world and its charms, and less spiritually inclined. The Raja Guna is the medium quality marked by a greater percentage of worldly passions, desires and attachments and their natural offshoots in a creature. It makes a creature inclined towards the material things of the gross world and their enjoyments, towards creation of wealth, its enhancement and protection, and generally having a desire for growth, development and expansion etc. It covers such qualities as worldly yearnings, passions, a stormy nature, agitated behaviour, ambitions, selfishness, expansionist tendencies, a desire to acquire, retain and develop such acquisitions even to the

detriment of one's long term spiritual welfare and even if such actions cause pain to others. All these pertain to this materialistic world. Such qualities give worldly fame and prosperity. If these qualities are judiciously mixed with the Satwic qualities, then they provide the person the better of the two worlds, both in terms of worldly fame as well as spiritual well being.

The Vasanas that have the Rajsic Guna or quality dominant in them can be compared to dust on a mirror. In this case some dusting and rubbing is needed to clean the mirror; a greater effort is needed as compared to the case with Satwic quality.

(c) The third quality is called the *Tama Guna* and is the meanest and the basest of the three Gunas. It is a demeaning quality in a creature that leads to his downfall and perpetual entanglement with things that are considered improper and unethical. It creates an inclination for committing all sorts of sins, misdeeds and demeanours. It leads the creature towards negativity and inspires him to acquire negative qualities such as various vices, evils, sins, perversions etc. It makes him inclined to be greedy, rapacious, haughty, arrogant, lustful, intoxicated, vile and wild to the extreme. Such a creature with a predominance of Tama Guna has utter disregard for propriety, noble virtues and ethics, for righteousness and morality.

In brief, it is the most degrading, denigrating and contemptible of the three characteristics in a person, and leads to such behaviour which is utterly immoral, denigrating and depraved, marked by grossness, crassness and recklessness. It therefore leads to his downfall, ignominy and ruin as well as ignorance, delusions, gloom, inertia, anger, frustration etc.

The Tamsic Guna or quality is like the embryonic membrane that covers the foetus in the womb. They cannot be removed easily and require great diligence, effort, persistence, dedication and careful handling requiring time and patience. It is the basest and the lowliest of the three characteristics, and the worst type to possess.

The Vasanas that have the Tama Guna in dominance are regarded as the 'bad Vasanas' or better still the 'worst type of Vasana' that any individual can have.

These Gunas, in varying ratios and mixtures, decide the character and personality of any given unit of creation. In modern world we recognize them as the 'gene' special to that individual, the 'gene' which makes each individual so unique in this creation. These Gunas can also be compared to the various shades and hues of colours that a painter uses to paint a picture or a portrait and inject life and uniqueness to it. Even the same painter cannot duplicate exactly a picture again—there is bound to be a difference between any two pictures or portraits no matter how invisible, imperceptible, microscopic and subtle it might be.

Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 104 along with Chaupai line nos. 2-8 that precede it.]

पति अनुकूल सदा रह सीता । सोभा खानि सुसील बनीता ॥ ३ ॥

जानति कृपासिंधु प्रभुताई । सेवति चरन कमल मन लाई ॥ ४ ॥

pati anukūla sadā raha sītā. sōbhā khāni susīla binītā. 3.

jānati kṛpāsindhu prabhutā'ī. sēvati carana kamala mana lā'ī. 4.

Sita, who was a mine of good virtues, polite and courteous, led an exemplary life of a disciplined, virtuous and loyal wife, always remaining devoted to her husband. (3)

She knew about the greatness and excellent character of Lord Ram, and served the Lord's lotus-like feet diligently and with devotion, applying her full heart in this service of her Lord¹. (4)

[Note—¹Sita was faithfully carrying out the advice given to her by her parents after her marriage to Lord Ram—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 334.

She was also obeying what Anusuiya, the wife of sage Atri, had advised her—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 5 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-19 that precede it.]

जद्यपि गृहं सेवक सेवकिनी । बिपुल सदा सेवा बिधि गुनी ॥ ५ ॥
निज कर गृह परिचरजा करई । रामचंद्र आयसु अनुसरई ॥ ६ ॥

jadyapi gr̥ham̐ sēvaka sēvakinī. bipula sadā sēvā bidhi gunī. 5.
nija kara gr̥ha paricarajā kara'ī. rāmacandra āyasu anusara'ī. 6.

Although there were many servants and attendants, both males and females, in the royal household, each of them well qualified in their respective field of service, and would always be very eager to carry out their duties diligently, yet Sita would attend to all the routine household chores personally, like any other housewife would usually do. She would remain obedient to Lord Ram every moment of her life. (5-6)

जेहि बिधि कृपासिंधु सुख मानइ । सोइ कर श्री सेवा बिधि जानइ ॥ ७ ॥
कौसल्यादि सासु गृह माहीं । सेवइ सबन्हि मान मद नाहीं ॥ ८ ॥
उमा रमा ब्रह्मादि बंदिता । जगदंबा संततमनिंदिता ॥ ९ ॥

jēhi bidhi kr̥pāsindhu sukha māna'i. sō'i kara śrī sēvā bidhi jāna'i. 7.
kausalyādi sāsu gr̥ha māhīm̐. sēva'i sabanhi māna mada nāhīm̐. 8.
umā ramā brahmādi banditā. jagadambā santatamaninditā. 9.

In whatever way Lord Ram, who was an ocean of grace, mercy and compassion (kr̥pāsindhu), would be happy, Sita (śrī) would do and act accordingly, because he knew how good service ought to be done to perfection, leaving no scope of error or shortcoming. (7)

She would also serve her mothers-in-law in a similar fashion (as she served Lord Ram)¹. She had no trace of pride or ego or snobbishness in her, and therefore she would join hands with other servants of the palace to carry out her duties. (8)

Sita is worshipped even by Brahma, the creator, and other gods of the pantheon (brahmādi banditā), along with great sages, saints and pious people (santatamaninditā) who all offer their worship and respects to her, as she was none other than Mother Goddess (jagadambā) who had manifested herself in Sita's form².

These gods and sages would offer their regular worship to Mother Goddess in her form known as goddesses Uma and Rama (umā ramā—i.e. the divine consorts of Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu respectively), so it naturally follows that all the gods, led by Brahma, as well as the great sages and saints would offer their worship to Sita³ as well as she too was a manifested form of Mother Goddess like the other two goddesses. (9)

[Note—¹This was also one of the advices given to her by her parents—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 334.

²Refer to: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precede Doha no. 246.

³Refer to: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3 and 5 that precede Doha no. 323.]

दो०. जासु कृपा कटाच्छु सुर चाहत चितव न सोइ ।
राम पदारबिंद रति करति सुभावहि खोइ ॥ २४ ॥
dōhā.

jāsu kṛpā kaṭācchu sura cāhata citava na sō'i.
rāma padārabinda rati karati subhāvahi khō'i. 24.

Even great gods yearn for a favour from Mother Goddess, wishing that she would glance at them even for a brief moment in order to bless them, but she never bothers to oblige them (and keeps looking away), the same Mother Goddess served the lotus-like feet of Lord Ram very faithfully, with devotion and diligence, yet not feeling proud that the Lord has granted this privilege to her*.

[*This verse can be interpreted in a different way too as follows: “Lord Ram, whose favour was eagerly sought after by the gods who yearned for a moment when the Lord would glance at them mercifully, but the Lord never obliged them, the same Lord had offered Sita the opportunity to serve his lotus-like feet. Though it was a great honour for Sita and a rare privilege granted to her, yet she never boasted of it or felt proud that she has gained the Lord’s grace and attention which were denied even to the mighty gods.”] (Doha no. 24)

चौ०. सेवहिं सानकूल सब भाई । रामचरन रति अति अधिकाई ॥ १ ॥
प्रभु मुख कमल बिलोकत रहहीं । कबहुँ कृपाल हमहि कछु कहहीं ॥ २ ॥
राम करहिं भ्रातन्ह पर प्रीती । नाना भाँति सिखावहिं नीती ॥ ३ ॥
caupāī.

sēvahiṁ sānakūla saba bhā'ī. rāmacarana rati ati adhikā'ī. 1.
prabhu mukha kamala bilōkata rahahīm. kabahum' kṛpāla hamahi kachu kahahīm. 2.
rāma karahim bhrātanha para prīti. nānā bhām'ti sikhāvahiṁ nīti. 3.

All the younger brothers of Lord Ram (viz. Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan) served him most faithfully and with high standards of integrity, for their love for the Lord and their devotion for his holy feet knew no bounds¹. (1)

They kept watching Lord Ram's lotus-like face eagerly in the hope that the merciful and compassionate Lord would like to give them some orders (which they would then carry out immediately)². (2)

Lord Ram loved all his brothers equally, and he would regularly instruct them on a variety of subjects (pertaining to principles of statecraft, polity, relations with one's family members as well as all others in the world, ideals of life and good behaviour, judicious handling of different situations in life, spiritualism, metaphysics, theology, wisdom, as well as the tenets of the scriptures and their profound philosophies, with advice about their practical applications in one's life)³. (3)

[Note—¹In this context, refer to: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 72 (Laxman's statement); (ii) Doha no. 160, and Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 162—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 163 (reaction of Bharat and Shatrughan when they came to learn about Lord Ram being sent to forest exile); (iii) Chaupai line nos. 1, 4-7 that precede Doha no. 178 (Bharat's statement at the time of refusing to accept the crown of Ayodhya).

²No sooner would Lord Ram express any desire, than a sort-of competition would be held between the three brothers as to who would be the first one to fulfill the Lord's wishes, as each of them was eager to do it himself.

³These verses impress upon the reader that there was complete harmony, undiluted love and affection, absolute loyalty and trust, and a strong bond of brotherhood and mutual respect between the four brothers—viz. Lord Ram, Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan. Lord Ram treated all his younger brothers equally and with the greatest of affection, and on their part the brothers reciprocated by showing matching love and respect for the Lord.]

हरषित रहिं नगर के लोग । करहिं सकल सुर दुर्लभ भोगा ॥ ४ ॥

अहनि सि बिधिहि मनावत रहहीं । श्रीरघुबीर चरन रति चाहहीं ॥ ५ ॥

haraṣita rahaiṁ nagara kē lōgā. karahiṁ sakala sura durlabha bhōgā. 4.
ahanisi bidhihi manāvata rahaiṁ. śrīraghubīra carana rati cahaiṁ. 5.

The citizens of Ayodhya lived a very happy and joyful life; they enjoyed all possible comforts and pleasures in this material world which were so countless and of the best quality that even the gods envied them¹. (4)

The subjects of Lord Ram prayed to the creator Brahma every moment of their lives that the only blessing or boon which they seek from him is to have steady devotion for the holy feet of Lord Ram, the brave Lord of the illustrious family of king Raghu (śrīraghubīra)². (5)

[Note—¹Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 195; (ii) Doha no. 344 along with Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede it; (b) Uttar Kand, (iii) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 27—to Doha no. 29.

These above referred verses show that that the city of Ayodhya was a very rich, prosperous, majestic and affluent place; it was a city that dimmed even heaven in its grandeur and beauty. Even the gods of heaven would envy the citizens of Ayodhya because the latter had more comfort and pleasure than what the gods enjoyed in heaven.

²The citizens of Ayodhya were so exceptionally happy and contented under Lord Ram that would pray to the Creator to let Lord Ram be their eternal King so that all of them could serve the Lord to the best of their abilities for the rest of their lives.

If a king is cruel, harsh, insensitive, wicked and exploitative, the subjects under him begin to suffer immensely. Then they would silently pray to the gods that their only wish was to somehow get rid of this king so that they are freed from the agony and torments they are being subjected to under him. No citizen would like to serve such a harsh ruler, and they would try to avoid him as best as they can.

On the other hand, if the king is good, compassionate and kind towards his subjects, treating their welfare with utmost priority, then it is obvious that the people would wish for his long life and welfare. In this case, everyone would like to offer his service to this king, and feel honoured in being able to do so. As far as the happy subjects of a good and gracious king are concerned, he is no less than a living god for them. They would willingly offer their obeisance to him and serve him because he offers his subjects all the good things in life that they would expect from a favourable god.]

दुइ सुत सुंदर सीताँ जाए । लव कुस बेद पुरानन्ह गाए ॥ ६ ॥
 दोउ बिजई बिनई गुन मंदिर । हरि प्रतिबिंब मनहुँ अति सुंदर ॥ ७ ॥
 दुइ दुइ सुत सब भ्रातन्ह केरे । भए रूप गुन सील घनेरे ॥ ८ ॥

du'i suta sundara sītām' jā'ē. lava kusa bēda purānanha gā'ē. 6.
 dō'u bija'ī bina'ī guna mandira. hari pratibimba manahum'ati sundara. 7.
 du'i du'i suta saba bhrātanha kērē. bha'ē rūpa guna sīla ghanērē. 8.

Sita gave birth to two glorious and brave sons, named Lava and Kush, whose virtues and glories are sung even by the Vedas and Purans (ancient scriptures and histories)¹.
 (6)

Both of these sons of Sita were invincible and stood victorious in battles. They were very polite, possessed excellent characters, and were a treasury of good virtues.

Verily indeed, they were like images of Lord Ram in their charm and beauty.
 (7)

In a similar way, all the other brothers of Lord Ram had two sons each, and all of these sons had charming forms, excellent virtues and characters, a lot of politeness, and other stellar qualities in them. (8)

[Note—¹Tulsidas has skipped narrating in detail about the birth of Lord Ram's sons while penning this classical Book 'Ram Charit Manas'. However, he has compensated for it in his another book that describes the magnificent story of Lord Ram, viz. the "Geetawali Ramayan". In this latter book, the birth of the two sons of Lord Ram, and some unfortunate events that preceded their birth, have been narrated very briefly in its Uttar Kand, verse nos. 34-36.

The full episode of the birth of Lava and Kush in the hermitage of sage Valmiki where Sita had to go due to certain reasons, and what happened after these two sons attained adulthood, have been described in detail in Veda Vyas' "Adhyatma Ramayan", Uttar Kand, (i) Canto 4, verse nos. 32-63; (ii) Canto 6, verse nos. 26-33, (iii) Canto 7, verse nos. 1-52.]

दो०. ग्यान गिरा गोतीत अज माया मन गुन पार ।

सोइ सच्चिदानंद घन कर नर चरित उदार ॥ २५ ॥

dōhā.

gyāna girā gōtīta aja māyā mana guna pāra.

sō'i saccidānanda ghana kara nara carita udāra. 25.

Verily indeed, in all sooth and without gainsay, the Supreme Lord of this creation, who is beyond the reach of intellect, who cannot be described in words, who is not within the reach of perception of any of the sense organs (gyāna girā gōtīta), who is unborn as he is eternal, having no end or beginning (aja), who transcends Maya (delusions), who is beyond the reach of the Mana (mind), and who has no physical attributes (māyā mana guna pāra)—that same Supreme Lord, who is the only Truth and a treasury of blissfulness (sō'i saccidānanda ghana), had lead an ideal life, exhibiting excellent virtues and characters, in his manifestation as a human being known as Lord Ram (the King-Emperor of Ayodhya) (kara nara carita udāra). (Doha no. 25)

[Note—In the context of the glorious virtues of Lord Ram cited in this Doha, refer to the following verses of Ram Charit Manas which also reiterate them— (a) Baal Kand, (i) Doha no. 198; (ii) Doha no. 199; (iii) Doha no. 205; (b) Aranya Kand, (iv) Chanda line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 6; (v) Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 11.]

चौ०. प्रातकाल सरऊ करि मज्जन । बैठहिं सभाँ संग द्विज सज्जन ॥ १ ॥

बेद पुरान बसिष्ट बखानहिं । सुनहिं राम जद्यपि सब जानहिं ॥ २ ॥

अनुजन्ह संजुत भोजन करहीं । देखि सकल जननीं सुख भरहीं ॥ ३ ॥

caupāī.

prātakāla sara'ū kari majjana. baiṭhahim sabhām' saṅga dvija sajjana. 1.

bēda purāna basiṣṭa bakhānahim. sunahim rāma jadyapi saba jānahim. 2.

anujanha sanjūta bhōjana karahim. dēkhi sakala jananim sukha bharahim. 3.

Lord Ram used to take a morning bath in the waters of river Saryu, and then he sat down in an assembly with Brahmins and other learned people accompanying him. (1)

In this august assembly, sage Vasistha would give a discourse on the Vedas and the Purans, expounding on their philosophies and principles. Lord Ram would listen to them very attentively, although he knew everything¹. (2)

The Lord always took his meals with all his brothers accompanying him. [To wit, whenever it was meal time, all the four brothers would sit down together to eat.]²

Seeing this strong and unbreakable bond of love, affection and brotherhood that existed between the brothers, and realizing how Lord Ram shared everything with his brothers and treated them equally, the mothers felt very glad and fortunate³. (3)

[Note—¹Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede Doha no. 204; (ii) Chaupai line no. 6 that precede Doha no. 205.

In these verses we read a similar thing. When Lord Ram was sent to sage Vasistha to study, the Lord would attentively listen to his teacher and quickly pick up the subjects taught. At that time too the Lord did not behave as if he knows everything, and does not need to be taught.

Then when he grew up, he would accompany his brothers to attend daily assemblies held in the morning where Vedas and Purans were narrated and explained by sage Vasistha and other learned elders of the society. The Lord would listen attentively, and then he would explain them further to his brothers as well as others who attended the congregation.

²Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 205.

Even during his early days as a young boy, Lord Ram would always eat his meals in the company of his brothers, and never alone.

³Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 200.

The mothers were happy and contented that the four brothers stood united, with a solid bond of love, affection and brotherhood between them so much so that it was like the case of a single person whose image is reflected from three mirrors. Here, the person is Lord Ram, and the three images that form in three different mirrors are Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan.]

भरत सत्रुहन दोनउ भाई । सहित पवनसुत उपबन जाई ॥ ४ ॥

बूझहिं बैठि राम गुन गाहा । कह हनुमान सुमति अवगाहा ॥ ५ ॥

सुनत बिमल गुन अति सुख पावहिं । बहुरि बहुरि करि बिनय कहावहिं ॥ ६ ॥

bharata satruhana dōna'u bhā'ī. sahita pavanasuta upabana jā'ī. 4.

būjhahim̐ baiṭhi rāma guna gāhā. kaha hanumāna sumati avagāhā. 5.

sunata bimala guna ati sukha pāvahim̐. bahuri bahuri kari binaya kahāvahim̐.

6.

The two brothers, Bharat and Shatrughan, would take along Hanuman, the son of the wind-god (pavanasuta), and go to the royal garden. (4)

There they would sit down and ask Hanuman to tell them about the glories and the various episodes related to Lord Ram's sojourn in the forest, from the time he met the Lord.

Hanuman would cheerfully narrate the Lord's glories and virtues to the best of his abilities and skills by delving deep into them, and bringing out the stellar qualities, exemplary character, noble behaviour and excellent ideals of Lord Ram through the medium of his narrative. (5)

Listening to Lord Ram's glorious and virtuous nature, the two brothers (Bharat and Shatrughan) would feel exhilarated, so much so that they would request Hanuman to repeat them again and again for their joy and happiness. (6)

[Note—When Lord Ram lived in Ayodhya, the two brothers stayed in close proximity with the Lord, knowing every single act or deed that the Lord did, and heard everything the Lord said. This is abundantly clear in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 25 herein above.

Hanuman was the only person available presently who could recount stories and episodes associated with the Lord during his stay in the forest. This means that Bharat and Shatrughan learnt about all the developments from the time Lord Ram met Hanuman at the foot of Mt. Rishyamook, till the Lord's coming back to Ayodhya from Lanka.

Earlier, when Bharat and Shatrughan were going to meet Lord Ram at Chitrakoot, they had heard of the Lord's glories while passing through the countryside and meeting villagers and others who had previously met Lord Ram—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 216; (ii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 220; (iii) Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede Doha no. 224.

The only gap in the story which the two brothers had no means to learn about was from the point when Bharat had left Chitrakoot to come back home to Ayodhya*1, and the time when Lord Ram met Hanuman*2. There was no one who could tell Bharat and Shatrughan anything related to that time period.

{Refer: Ram Charit Manas, *1 = Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 316.

*2 = Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 1—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 4.}]

सब केँ गृह गृह होहिँ पुराना । रामचरित पावन बिधि नाना ॥ ७ ॥

नर अरु नारि राम गुन गानहिँ । करहिँ दिवस निसि जात न जानहिँ ॥ ८ ॥

saba kēm gr̥ha gr̥ha hōhiṁ purānā. rāmacarita pāvana bidhi nānā. 7.

nara aru nāri rāma guna gānahiṁ. karahiṁ divasa nisi jāta na jānahiṁ. 8.

The Purans (scriptures dealing with ancient histories) were read and discussed in every household of the city of Ayodhya.

Similarly, Lord Ram's virtuous nature and glories, as well as different stories associated with him that stressed the Lord's divinity and holiness were also narrated and recounted in every home on a regular basis. (7)

Both male and female citizens praised Lord Ram by singing verses in his honour every day and night; they lived such a happy and contented life that they were not aware of the passage of time¹. (8)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede Doha no. 21; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 6-7 that precede Doha no. 22, (iii) Doha no. 26; (iv) Doha no. 30 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-2, 8 that precede it.]

दो०. अवधपुरी बासिन्ह कर सुख संपदा समाज ।

सहस सेष नहिं कहि सकहिं जहँ नृप राम बिराज ॥ २६ ॥

dōhā.

avadhapurī bāsinha kara sukha sampadā samāja.

sahasa sēṣa nahim kahi sakahim jaham nṛpa rāma birāja. 26.

The all-round joy, happiness, comfort, pleasure, well-being and prosperity that citizens of Ayodhya enjoyed were so immense and uncountable that even Lord Seshnath, with his thousand tongues, is unable to narrate the good fortune and the luck of the subjects of a kingdom where Lord Ram was the King-Emperor¹. (Doha no. 26)

[Note—¹Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, (i) Doha no. 297; (b) Uttar Kand, (ii) Doha no. 29.]

{The verses that follow herein below describe the magnificence, the opulence, the prosperity, the majesty and the beauty of the city of Ayodhya whose ruler was no one else but Lord Ram, the Supreme Lord of this creation himself. Ayodhya put to shame the beauty and charm of heaven, and it even tempted great sages so much that they would, for a while, like to give up their vows of renunciation and detachment from all material attractions of this world in order to enjoy the pleasures and comforts of the city.}

चौ०. नारदादि सनकादि मुनीसा । दरसन लागि कोसलाधीसा ॥ १ ॥

दिन प्रति सकल अजोध्या आवहिं । देखि नगरु बिरागु बिसरावहिं ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

nāradādi sanakādi munīsā. darasana lagi kōsalādhīsā. 1.

dina prati sakala ajōdhyā āvahim. dēkhi nagaru birāgu bisarāvahim. 2.

Great sages such as Narad, Sankadi and others, would come to Ayodhya daily with the wish to have a divine sight of Lord Ram who was the King of Kaushal (kōsalādhīsā).

When they saw the majesty, the opulence and the prosperity of the city, they would, for a while, forget about their vows of renunciation and detachment from all sorts of attractions of this material world, because they would be mesmerized by the city's charms and feel tempted to enjoy them as the citizens of Ayodhya were enjoying them. (1-2)

जातरूप मनि रचित अटारीं । नाना रंग रुचिर गच ढारीं ॥ ३ ॥

पुर चहुँ पास कोट अति सुंदर । रचे कँगूरा रंग रंग बर ॥ ४ ॥

नव ग्रह निकर अनीक बनाई । जनु घेरी अमरावति आई ॥ ५ ॥

jātarūpa mani racita aṭārīm. nānā raṅga rucira gaca ḍhārīm. 3.
pura cahum̐ pāsa kōṭa ati sundara. racē kaṅgūrā raṅga raṅga bara. 4.
nava graha nikara anīka banāī. janu ghērī amarāvati āī. 5.

The balconies and attics of the city's buildings were plated in gold and studded with gems. They were paved with a mosaic of tiles of a variety of colours. (3)

The city was surrounded by a beautiful city-wall in the form of a strong rampart, fortified at regular intervals with battlements and parapets that were painted in a variety of charming colours. (4)

The impression one got by seeing this magnificent wall of the city, that girdled it on all sides like a strong rampart built around a fort, complete with its battlements and parapets, was that the deities of the nine planets have collected their armies together to surround the heavenly city of Amravati, the capital of Indra, the king of gods, in a gigantic circle so as to provide a protective shield around it¹. (5)

[Note—¹In this metaphor, Ayodhya represents Amravati; Lord Ram represents Indra; and the city wall, that looked more like the walls of a fort rather than a mere boundary wall to separate a city from its surrounding areas, resembled the armies of the nine planets that surrounded Amravati from all sides. The armies of the deities of the nine planets surrounded Amravati to protect it from any danger. Hence, the metaphor is very apt because the wall that enclosed the city of Ayodhya was also meant to protect the opulent and magnificent city of Ayodhya from intruders and unwanted visitors.

Obviously, large detachments of the army of Ayodhya must have been stationed all around this wall, as well as at the majestic gates that allowed entry into and exit from the city to the outside world. At these gates were present chief commanders of the troops assigned with the job of protection of the city of Ayodhya.

The deities of the nine planets were like these chief commanders protecting the entrance points to Amravati. The term 'nine planets' used in the text indicate that there were 'nine gates' for entry and exit from Ayodhya, and each gate was manned by a chief commander of the army battalion assigned to protect that part of the wall.]

महि बहु रंग रचित गच काँचा । जो बिलोकि मुनिबर मन नाचा ॥ ६ ॥

धवल धाम ऊपर नभ चुंबत । कलस मनहुँ रबि ससि दुति निंदत ॥ ७ ॥

बहु मनि रचित झरोखा भ्राजहिं । गृह गृह प्रति मनि दीप बिराजहिं ॥ ८ ॥

mahi bahu raṅga racita gaca kām̐cā. jō bilōki munibara mana nācā. 6.
dhavala dhāma ūpara nabha cumbata. kalasa manahum̐ rabi sasi duti nindata. 7.
bahu mani racita jharōkhā bhrājahiṁ. gr̥ha gr̥ha prati mani dīpa birājahiṁ. 8.

The streets and walkways of the city were paved with colourful crystals, making them glitter with a multitude of colours. The sight was so tempting and alluring that it even swayed the mind of sages who were usually immune to such visual attractions. (6)

Tall buildings were so high that they appeared to kiss the sky. The gilded pinnacles and cupolas on the top of these buildings shone so brilliantly that they appeared to put to shame the radiance of the sun and the moon. (7)

The buildings had carved and well decorated latticed windows that were studded with a variety of precious gems.

Every home had lighted lamps that were decorated with gems. (8)

छं०. मनि दीप राजहिं भवन भ्राजहिं देहरीं बिद्रुम रची । १ ।
मनि खंभ भीति बिरंचि बिरची कनक मनि मरकत खची ॥ २ ॥
सुंदर मनोहर मंदिरायत अजिर रुचिर फटिक रचे । ३ ।
प्रति द्वार द्वार कपाट पुरट बनाइ बहु बज्रनि खचे ॥ ४ ॥

chanda.

mani dīpa rājahiṁ bhavana bhrājahiṁ dēharīṁ bidruma racī. 1.
mani khambha bhīti birañci biracī kanaka mani marakata khacī. 2.
sundara manōhara mandirāyata ajira rucira phaṭika racē. 3.
prati dvāra dvāra kapāṭa puraṭa banā'i bahu bajranhi khacē. 4.

Gem studded lamps adorned the grand mansions of the city of Ayodhya. The thresholds were paved with corals. (Chanda line no. 1)

The columns and pillars of these buildings were studded with gems. The walls were plated with gold and embellished with emeralds. The result was that the buildings looked exceptionally magnificent as if the Creator had himself designed and decorated them, leaving nothing to chance as far as imparting beauty to his creation was concerned. (Chanda line no. 2)

The mansions are magnificent, majestic, beautiful and large. Their courtyards are paved with crystals. (Chanda line no. 3)

The doors and gates were plated with gold and studded with diamonds. (Chanda line no. 4)

दो०. चारु चित्रसाला गृह गृह प्रति लिखे बनाइ ।
राम चरित जे निरख मुनि ते मन लेहिं चोराइ ॥ २७ ॥

dōhā.

cāru citrasālā gr̥ha gr̥ha prati likhē banā'i.
rāma carita jē nirakha muni tē mana lēhim cōrā'i. 27.

Every home had art galleries where frescos (wall paintings) depicting various episodes related to Lord Ram's life and time were colourfully painted. These paintings were so charming and attractive that they would stir the heart of sages who saw them, as they became very emotional at the sight of pictures that reminded them about Lord Ram's life and time¹. (Doha no. 27)

[Note—¹The private mansions and public buildings of the city of Ayodhya were large enough to include art galleries as well. These art galleries were private as well as public. Sages who visited Ayodhya would visit public galleries, while some of them would be invited by the citizens to become their guests and bless them and their homes. Such sages had the chance to view private galleries.]

From the description of the city of Ayodhya which we read in these verses, it appeared to be a fairy-tale utopian city like none that ever existed in the past, and none that would exist in the future too.]

चौ०. सुमन बाटिका सबहिं लगाई । बिबिध भाँति करि जतन बनाई ॥ १ ॥
लता ललित बहु जाति सुहाई । फूलहिं सदा बसंत कि नाई ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

sumana bāṭikā sabahim lagā'īm. bibidha bhāmṭi kari jatana banā'īm. 1.
latā lalita bahu jāti suhā'īm. phūlahim sadā basanta ki nā'īm. 2.

Every home had a beautiful flower garden with multitudes of colourful flowers; these gardens were laid out with great care, well tended and carefully manicured. (1)

The gardens had lovely creepers of every variety, and they blossomed all the year round. The overall impression that one got of these gardens was that the spring season prevailed in them throughout the year.

[To wit, effort was made to plant all varieties of flowers and creepers in the gardens so that one or the other would bloom during any given period of the year, making the gardens look magnificent and charming, with colourful flowers and creepers always blooming, irrespective of the prevailing season.] (2)

गुंजत मधुकर मुखर मनोहर । मारुत त्रिबिधि सदा बह सुंदर ॥ ३ ॥
नाना खग बालकन्हि जिआए । बोलत मधुर उड़ात सुहाए ॥ ४ ॥

gunjāta madhukara mukhara manōhara. māruta tribidhi sadā baha sundara.
3.

nānā khaga bālakanhi ji'ā'ē. bōlata madhura urāta suhā'ē. 4.

Black bees buzzed around merrily, their humming sound adding a sort of a pleasant background music to the whole environment.

Soothing breeze, that was fragrant, soft and cool, blew all around the year. (3)

Birds of different varieties that were reared by the children of the city sang in melodious tunes, and flew around gracefully. (4)

मोर हंस सारस पारावत । भवननि पर सोभा अति पावत ॥ ५ ॥
जुहँ तहँ देखहिं निज परिछाहीं । बहु बिधि कूजहिं नृत्य कराहीं ॥ ६ ॥

mōra hansa sārasa pārāvata. bhavanani para sōbhā ati pāvata. 5.
jaham'taham'dēkhahim nija parichāhīm. bahu bidhi kūjahim nr̥tya karāhīm. 6.

Peacocks, swans, cranes and pigeons presented a most lovely sight as they perched in rows on the top of the mansions. (5)

When these birds saw their images being reflected from the gems and other reflecting surfaces such as small mirrors that were embedded in the walls of these mansions, they would dance in merry abundance and sing in a variety of tunes particular to their species¹. (6)

[Note—¹When the birds saw their reflection in the shining surfaces of the buildings, they were mightily fascinated at the sight of their own images because they would realize how beautiful and lovely their own forms were. This made them so happy that they danced and sang to express their joy.

Another reason for their happiness was that they thought that the images which they saw on the walls, floors, ceilings, roof tops and the patios of the buildings were other birds who had come to join them. This made them very excited and jubilant.]

सुक सारिका पढ़ावहिं बालक । कहहु राम रघुपति जनपालक ॥ ७ ॥
राज दुआर सकल बिधि चारू । बीथीं चौहट रुचिर बजारू ॥ ८ ॥

suka sārīkā paṛhāvahim bālaka. kahahu rāma raghupati janapālaka. 7.
rāja du'āra sakala bidhi cārū. bīthīm cauhaṭa rucira bajārū. 8.

The children of the city taught their pet parrots and blackbirds (suka sārīkā) to repeat the names of Lord Ram, such as 'Ram', 'Raghupati', 'Janpalak'¹ etc., in their respective melodious voices. (7)

The gates of the royal palace were grand and majestic. All the lanes and by-lanes, squares and markets of the city of Ayodhya were splendidly laid out, and looked very beautiful to the beholder. (8)

[Note—¹The word ‘Raghupati’ means ‘the Lord of the illustrious family of kings descending from the ancient king Raghu of Ayodhya’.

The word ‘Janpalak’ means ‘the Lord who takes care of his subjects with a lot of care and affection’.

Once these two birds became trained to utter the name of Lord Ram, they would keep on repeating it at all times of the day and night. The result was the holy name of Lord Ram echoed in all corners of the city of Ayodhya, and whenever any one entered a home or passed by near it, he or she was welcomed with this greeting. The holy name uttered by the parrot and the blackbird in every home reverberated throughout the city of Ayodhya as if the entire city was chanting the holy name of Lord Ram continuously.]

छं०. बाजार रुचिर न बनइ बरनत बस्तु बिनु गथ पाइए । १ ।

जहँ भूप रमानिवास तहँ की संपदा किमि गाइए ॥ २ ॥

बैठे बजाज सराफ बनिक अनेक मनहुँ कुबेर ते । ३ ।

सब सुखी सब सचरित सुंदर नारि नर सिसु जरठ जे ॥ ४ ॥

chanda.

bājāra rucira na bana'i baranata bastu binu gatha pā'i'ē. 1.

jaham' bhūpa ramānivāsa taham' kī sampadā kimi gā'i'ē. 2.

baiṭhē bajāja sarāpha banika anēka manahum' kubēra tē. 3.

saba sukhī saba saccharita sundara nāri nara sisu jaraṭha jē. 4.

Market places were splendid, well organized, and laid out in a systematic manner so much so that it is not possible to describe their magnificence. These market places had an abundance of all sorts of merchandise, and they were available for the asking at such cheap prices that it seemed they are being made available for free. (Chanda line no. 1)

Verily indeed, in all sooth and without gainsay, a place whose King was the Lord of Rama (i.e. Lord of Laxmi, the patron goddess of wealth, prosperity, abundance and opulence)—say, how can one sing (i.e. describe) the magnificence and grandeur of that place with its wealth and opulence in a sufficient manner?

[To wit, it is impossible to describe the grandeur and magnificence, the opulence and wealth, the majesty and charms of Ayodhya where Lord Ram, the Lord of the world, was himself its King-Emperor.]¹ (Chanda line no. 2)

Rich cloth merchants (bajāja), bankers who also traded in gold and silver (sarāpha), as well as other merchants and traders of different kinds of merchandise and commodities (banika) sat in their well-furnished offices and shops, giving the impression that countless Kubers (who is the treasurer of the gods, and a custodian of the wealth in heaven) have assumed human forms to look after trading and other commercial activities in Ayodhya. (Chanda line no. 3)

All the citizens of Ayodhya, the males and the females, the children as well as the old—were happy, had good character, and possessed charming personalities. (Chanda line no. 4)

[Note—¹Refer also to Doha no. 29 herein below.]

दो०. उत्तर दिसि सरजू बह निर्मल जल गंभीर ।
बाँधे घाट मनोहर स्वल्प पंक नहिं तीर ॥ २८ ॥

dōhā.

uttara disi sarajū baha nirmala jala gambhīra.
bāṁdhē ghāṭa manōhara svalpa paṅka nahim tīra. 28.

The holy river Saryu, with its deep water that was crystal clear, flowed to the north of the city¹.

The river had embankments on its either sides, with steps leading to the water. The entire stretch of the river, with its embankments and steps, were kept spotlessly clean so that no slush or slippery ground could be found anywhere. (Doha no. 28)

[Note—¹Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 4.]

चौ०. दूरि फराक रुचिर सो घाटा । जहँ जल पिअहिं बाजि गज ठाटा ॥ १ ॥
पनिघट परम मनोहर नाना । तहाँ न पुरुष करहिं अस्त्राना ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

dūri pharāka rucira sō ghāṭā. jaham̐ jala pi'ahim bāji gaja ṭhāṭā. 1.
panighaṭa parama manōhara nānā. tahām̐ na puruṣa karahim asnānā. 2.

A little further away (from the embankment of the river Saryu, with the steps leading to its water, where the citizens came to bathe) were similar embankments with steps where elephants and horses would go to drink water. (1)

There were special designated areas, beautiful and well-maintained, where the people would go to collect water (panighaṭa).

Likewise, special areas were earmarked for the use of women folk of the city, where males were not allowed. (2)

राजघाट सब बिधि सुंदर बर । मज्जहिं तहाँ बरन चारिउ नर ॥ ३ ॥
तीर तीर देवन्ह के मंदिर । चहुँ दिसि तिन्ह के उपबन सुंदर ॥ ४ ॥

rājaghāṭa saba bidhi sundara bara. majjahim̐ tahām̐ barana cāri'u nara. 3.
tīra tīra dēvanha kē mandira. cahum̐ disi tinha kē upabana sundara. 4.

There was a part of the bank of the river Saryu that was called 'Rajghat'. It was an area of the embankment with its steps where all male citizens belonging to all the four sections of the society were free to go and take their baths. (3)

All along the banks of the river stood temples dedicated to the gods and revered deities of the place. Each of these places of worship were surrounded by beautiful gardens. (4)

कहुँ कहुँ सरिता तीर उदासी । बसहिँ ग्यान रत मुनि संन्यासी ॥ ५ ॥
तीर तीर तुलसिका सुहाई । बृंद बृंद बहु मुनिह लगाई ॥ ६ ॥

kahum̐ kahum̐ saritā tīra udāsī. basahim̐ gyāna rata muni sann'yāsī. 5.
tīra tīra tulasikā suhā'ī. br̥nda br̥nda bahu muninha lagā'ī. 6.

At many places along the banks of the river lived hermits and ascetics who had renounced the world and spent their time in pursuit of spiritual knowledge, self-realization and enlightenment (by practicing meditation and contemplation, and study of the scriptures). (5)

These hermits and ascetics had planted pleasant looking clusters of the 'holy Basil plant' along the banks of the river*.

[*This verse can be read as follows also: "All along the banks of the river there were clusters of the 'holy Basil plant'. These were planted by the hermits and ascetics and other holy men who lived near the river."] (6)

पुर सोभा कछु बरनि न जाई । बाहेर नगर परम रुचिराई ॥ ७ ॥
देखत पुरी अखिल अघ भागा । बन उपबन बापिका तड़ागा ॥ ८ ॥

pura sōbhā kachu barani na jā'ī. bāhēra nagara parama rucirā'ī. 7.
dēkhata purī akhila agha bhāgā. bana upabana bāpikā tarāgā. 8.

The grandeur, the magnificence, the splendour, the beauty and the charm of the city of Ayodhya cannot be described. The areas surrounding the city on the outside were no less beautiful and charming, for its outskirts were very picturesque and pleasant. (7)

The very sight of the picturesque city of Ayodhya, with its forests, gardens, wells and ponds, was so rejuvenating, soothing, comforting and blissful that it would drive away all the sufferings and agitations a person might be experiencing due to the evil effects of his sins. (8)

छं०. बापीं तड़ाग अनूप कूप मनोहरायत सोहहीं । १ ।
सोपान सुंदर नीर निर्मल देखि सुर मुनि मोहहीं ॥ २ ॥
बहु रंग कंज अनेक खग कूजहिं मधुप गुंजारहीं । ३ ।
आराम रज्ज पिकादि खग रव जनु पथिक हंकारहीं ॥ ४ ॥

chanda.

bāpīm tarāga anūpa kūpa manōharāyata sōhahīm. 1.
 sōpāna sundara nīra nirmala dēkhi sura muni mōhahīm. 2.
 bahu raṅga kaṅja anēka khaga kūjahīm madhupa guṇjārahīm. 3.
 ārāma ramya pikādi khaga rava janu pathika haṅkārahīm. 4.

Large and small water bodies such as lakes, ponds and wells adorned the city, and made it look beautiful. (Chanda line no. 1)

Even sages and gods were mesmerized by the sight of these water bodies with their crystal clean water, and gem-studded steps leading to them. (Chanda line no. 2)

These ponds and lakes were adorned by lotus flowers of different hues of colour that bloomed in abundance. Birds of different varieties frolicked around and warbled melodiously, and black-bees buzzed around in droves, thereby lending a most fascinating aura to these water bodies. (Chanda line no. 3)

Cuckoo and other kinds of birds sang merrily in the many beautifully laid out and delightfully manicured gardens that abounded in the city, so much so that their melodious voices seemed to invite passers-by to come inside these gardens to enjoy their beauty and charm. (Chanda line no. 4)

दो०. रमानाथ जहँ राजा सो पुर बरनि कि जाइ ।
 अनिमादिक सुख संपदा रही अवध सब छाड़ ॥ २९ ॥
 dōhā.

ramānātha jaham' rājā sō pura barani ki jā'i.
 animādika sukha sampadā rahīm avadha saba chā'i. 29.

Verily indeed, there is no wonder that the city of Ayodhya presented such a fantastically magnificent sight that it is beyond description because it was a city whose King-Emperor was Lord Ram, the Lord of the world¹.

All sorts of wealth, prosperity and opulence, as well as the many magical charms such as Anima etc.², abounded in Ayodhya. (Doha no. 29)

[Note—¹Refer also to Chanda line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 28 herein above.

²According to the 'Bhavana Upanishad' of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 2, stanza no. 16, there are the following nine types of magical powers or Siddhis in this world:

(i) 'Anima' means the power to become microscopic or so minute that one becomes invisible to the naked eye; to become small like an atom; (ii) 'Mahima' is to have majesty, glory and fame; to be honoured and acknowledged for one's achievements, wisdom, erudition, knowledge and skills; to become huge like a mountain, thereby standing out and being unique or special in a crowd; (iii) 'Garima' is to be a heavy-weight and to be well-recognised in any field, to have special qualities that give one's ideas and words a great amount of importance and weight; to have stature, dignity, decorum, gravity and significance; (iv) 'Laghima' is the grand virtue of being simple and humble inspite of being great, powerful and authoritative;

it is to have simplicity and humility despite possessing grandeur, majesty, power, authority and magnificence; (v) 'Praapti' is to be able to attain, gain or obtain anything wished or desired for; (vi) 'Praakramya' is to have valour, ardour, strength, powers, prowess, potential and punch leading to triumph, glory and majesty; (vii) 'Ishwatwa' is to be able to have lordship or sway over everything else; to be able to rule over others; (viii) 'Vashitwa' is to be able to control and subdue others, and exert influence on them so much so that they become obedient and subservient; and (ix) 'Praakaashya' is to be able to assume any form one wishes.

Sometimes, Paraakramya is replaced by 'Praakaamya', which means irresistible will to do and achieve success in anything. But they imply the same thing because one obtains victory and glory only when one has an irresistible desire to attain it.

According to some versions, 'Mukti', or to obtain liberation and deliverance from all sorts of bondages and fetters, is also regarded as one of the Siddhis. It is closely related to 'Moksha' meaning final spiritual emancipation and deliverance of the aspirant.

According to some other accounts, 'Bhukti'—i.e. the ability to enjoy whatever one wishes to acquire and enjoy, is also one of the nine Siddhis.

The idea is that the majority of the citizens of Ayodhya possessed these magical powers.]

चौ०. जहँ तहँ नर रघुपति गुन गावहिं । बैठि परसपर इहइ सिखावहिं ॥ १ ॥

भजहु प्रनत प्रतिपालक रामहि । सोभा सील रूप गुन धामहि ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

jaham̐ tahaṁ̐ nara raghupati guna gāvahim̐. baiṭhi parasapara iha'i
sikhāvahim̐. 1.

bhajahu pranata pratipālaka rāmahi. sōbhā sīla rūpa guna dhāmahi. 2.

Everywhere people sang the glories of Lord Ram, the exalted Lord of the illustrious family of kings descending from the ancient king Raghu (raghupati). They would sit down (in groups) and exhort each other as follows: (1)

'Let us worship and have devotion for Lord Ram¹ who is a benevolent protector of all those who have submitted themselves before him. The Lord is an embodiment of the virtues of elegance, courteousness, amiability, charm and excellence of character. (2)

[Note—¹Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 26.]

जलज बिलोचन स्यामल गातहि । पलक नयन इव सेवक त्रातहि ॥ ३ ॥

धृत सर रुचिर चाप तूनीरहि । संत कंज बन रबि रनधीरहि ॥ ४ ॥

jalaja bilōcana syāmala gātaḥi. palaka nayana iva sēvaka trātaḥi. 3.

dhṛta sara rucira cāpa tūnīraḥi. santa kaṁja bana rabi ranadhīraḥi. 4.

Let us worship and have devotion for Lord Ram who has lotus-like eyes and a dark complexion.

Even as the eyelid protects the eye from all harm, the Lord too protects and eliminates the sufferings of all his devotees who are in distress and seek protection from the Lord. (3)

Let us worship and have devotion for Lord Ram who holds a magnificent bow, an infallible arrow, and a quiver that never remains empty (to signal the Lord's willingness and readiness to protect the interest of his devotees).

For myriad numbers of lotus flowers representing saints and pious souls, the Lord, who is invincible in a battle-field (*ranadhīrahi*), is like the sun which makes the lotus flowers bloom in its presence, because Lord Ram's presence delights the heart of such saints and pious souls who flourish under the benevolent protection of the Lord. (4)

काल कराल ब्याल खगराजहि । नमत राम अकाम ममता जहि ॥ ५ ॥

लोभ मोह मृगजूथ किरातहि । मनसिज करि हरि जन सुखदातहि ॥ ६ ॥

kāla karāla byāla khagarājahi. namata rāma akāma mamatā jahi. 5.

lōbha mōha mṛgajūtha kirātahi. manasija kari hari jana sukhadātahi. 6.

Let us worship and have devotion for Lord Ram who is like Garud (i.e. the king of birds and a mount of Lord Vishnu) for the purpose devouring (i.e. eliminating the fear of) the poisonous snake symbolised by Kaal (i.e. death).

[Lord Ram removes the fear of death because he guarantees deliverance, emancipation and salvation to his devotees. Lord Ram's devotee is assured of the Lord's protection against the torments the soul suffers after death.]

Lord Ram removes all worries and sufferings that are associated with a person being attached to this material world if the person bows before the Lord and worships him selflessly, for the Lord would make the person develop a sense of detachment and dispassion towards artificial things of this world that are all mortal.

[A true devotee of Lord Ram develops a natural sense of renunciation, detachment and dispassion towards this gross, mortal world because he begins to realize its temporary and transient nature. Instead, he becomes focused on Lord Ram as he knows that the Lord is the only one who can grant his soul eternal peace, rest and beatitude.] (5)

Let us worship and have devotion for Lord Ram who is like a hunter for the purpose of eliminating countless herds of deer representing hordes of worldly delusions.

Similarly, Lord Ram is like a lion for the purpose of killing (destroying) elephants symbolised by countless worldly passions and desires for gratification that are very strong and cause havoc to one's mental and emotional peace and well-being.

[Lord Ram inculcates a sense of renunciation, detachment and dispassion in his devotee so much so that he would not be tempted by any of the sense objects and material charms of the world which usually rob a person's peace of mind and make him restless.] (6)

संसय सोक निबिड़ तम भानुहि । दनुज गहन घन दहन कृसानुहि ॥ ७ ॥
जनकसुता समेत रघुबीरहि । कस न भजहु भंजन भव भीरहि ॥ ८ ॥

sansaya sōka nibiṛa tama bhānuhi. danuja gahana ghana dahana kṛsānuhi. 7.
janakasutā samēta raghubīrahi. kasa na bhajahu bhanjana bhava bhīrahi. 8.

Let us worship and have devotion for Lord Ram who is like a sun for the purpose of eliminating darkness symbolised by doubts and confusions (sansaya), as well as grief and sorrows of all kinds (sōka).

Let us worship and have devotion for Lord Ram who is like a fire that is able to easily destroy a forest symbolised by the cruel demons.

[The word 'demon' has two connotations here: One, it refers to the elimination of the demons led by their king Ravana of Lanka during the epic war that Lord Ram fought and won only recently. The second connotation of the word 'demon' refers to all the evil, sinful and negative traits that are present in this world, and which together give a lot of trouble to the creatures just like the demons who had been tormenting the world.] (7)

Why should we not worship and have devotion for Lord Ram along with Sita, the daughter of Janak (janakasutā), who destroys all sorts of fears and torments associated with life and death in this vast ocean-like world of transmigration?

[The world of life and death is as fearsome and terrorizing as the vast ocean that creates horrors in the mind of a person who is trapped in it. Just like a sturdy ship or a buoy that can save a person's life when he is about to drown in the high waters of the ocean, Lord Ram stands firm in his support for his devotee, and ensures that he never sinks in the endless ocean of transmigration, but gets across to the other side fearlessly by granting his soul deliverance, emancipation and salvation.] (8)

बहु बासना मसक हिम रासिहि । सदा एकरस अज अबिनासिहि ॥ ९ ॥
मुनि रंजन भंजन महि भारहि । तुलसिदास के प्रभुहि उदारहि ॥ १० ॥

bahu bāsanā masaka hima rāsihi. sadā ēkarasa aja abināsihi. 9.
muni ranjana bhanjana mahi bhārahi. tulasidāsa kē prabhuhi udārahi. 10.

Let us worship and have devotion for Lord Ram who is like frost for the purpose of destroying or eliminating countless mosquitoes symbolized by numerous worldly desires and lust that constantly prick and disturb the creature and his peace of mind¹.

Let us worship and have devotion for Lord Ram who is uniform and changeless, is eternal and has no beginning or end, and is imperishable and immortal². (9)

Let us worship and have devotion for Lord Ram who delights and grants joy and happiness to sages and pious souls³.

Let us worship and have devotion for Lord Ram who is an eliminator of the burden of the earth and removes all the torments its inhabitants suffer from⁴.

Verily indeed, let us worship and have devotion for Lord Ram who is the magnanimous, benevolent and gracious Lord of Tulsidas (tulasidāsa kē prabhu)⁵.’
(10)

[Note—¹Mosquitoes are a constant source of nuisance for a person; they bite and sting here and there relentlessly, not allowing anyone to rest in peace. Besides this, they cause a host of diseases. But these insects have one enemy—which is frost. During extreme cold weather, mosquitoes die; they thrive in hot and humid environment.

Therefore, in this metaphor Lord Ram is likened to the frost that cause all sorts of worldly desires and lust to vanish just like the case of mosquitoes vanishing during cold season.

²Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 341; (b) Lanka Kand, (ii) Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 110.

Lord Ram is a personification of the Supreme Being, who is also known as Brahm as well as the Parmatma. These two words stand for the cosmic Consciousness, as well as the Supreme Atma or the Supreme Soul of this creation.

According to the metaphysical philosophy of the Upanishads, the Atma or the cosmic Consciousness is an entity that is invisible, subtle, sublime, eternal, imperishable, uniform, all-pervading, all-encompassing, and the only universal Truth of creation. It is neither born nor does it die; it remains unchanged and uniform in all phases and spectrums of creation. The only factor that appears to give the impression that the otherwise changeless cosmic Atma is subject to changes is when it manifests itself as a living being who has a gross mortal body, for then this body takes a birth and dies one day. But when one delves deep into the reality one discovers that this gross, perishable body is not a ‘true’ identity of any individual, for his true identity is his ‘pure conscious self’, known as the Atma; and this individual’s Atma is nothing but a fraction of the cosmic Atma, known as the Parmatma, that stand for cosmic Consciousness.

Lord Ram’s true identity is not his physical and visible form which we know as a Prince or King of Ayodhya, but it is the ‘cosmic Consciousness’ that is known as Brahm. Lord Ram is a personified form of the Parmatma with the virtues enumerated herein above.

³In this context, refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, line no. 2 of Doha no. 9.

⁴The Supreme Being had manifested in the form of Lord Ram when the gods, sages and mother earth prayed to the Lord to save them from the horrors unleashed by the cruel demons—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 184—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 187.

This word ‘demon’ has a wide ramification, because it is not restricted to the cruel monsters who lived in Lanka and had Ravana as their king, but the term applies to all sorts of sins, evil, vices, worldly passions, desires, greed, rapacity, perversion, deceit, and all sorts of negative factors and traits, with their horrifying consequences, that keep the world on the boil, robbing all peace and happiness of its inhabitants. Lord Ram eliminating the demons is a symbolic way of saying that the Lord eliminates all negative factors in this world so as to grant peace and happiness to his devotees.

⁵Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 130-b.]

दो०. एहि बिधि नगर नारि नर करहिं राम गुन गान ।
सानुकूल सब पर रहहिं संतत कृपानिधान ॥ ३० ॥

dōhā.

ēhi bidhi nagara nāri nara karahiṁ rāma guna gāna.
sānukūla saba para rahahiṁ santata kṛpānidhāna. 30.

In the aforesaid manner, the citizens of Ayodhya, both the males and the females, sang the glories and virtues of Lord Ram, praising the Lord and glorifying him by their constant remembrance of the Lord's greatness and immaculate virtues.

On his part, Lord Ram, who is truly a treasury of mercy, compassion, kindness, grace, magnanimity and benevolence (santata kṛpānidhāna), always remained favourable towards his subjects, under all manners of situations and circumstances. (Doha no. 30)

चौ०. जब ते राम प्रताप खगेसा । उदित भयउ अति प्रबल दिनेसा ॥ १ ॥
पूरि प्रकास रहेउ तिहुँ लोका । बहुतेन्ह सुख बहुतन मन सोका ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

jaba tē rāma pratāpa khagēsā. udita bhaya'u ati prabala dinēsā. 1.
pūri prakāsa rahē'u tihum' lōkā. bahutēnha sukha bahutana mana sōkā. 2.

The saintly crow Kaagbhusund continued his discourse by telling Garud, the king of birds (khagēsā): 'Oh king of birds! Ever since the splendourous sun symbolized by Lord Ram's great glories and majesty rose on the horizon of this world (i.e. ever since Lord Ram was born as the prince of Ayodhya), --- (1)

--- The entire world, with all its three divisions (i.e. the heaven, the earth, and the nether world), was flooded with a brilliant light that dispelled all sorts of darkness. This created a lot of joy and happiness in the heart of many, while at the same time it was the cause of torment and fear for many others¹. (2)

[Note—¹The rise of the sun gives joy and enthusiasm to the world and its creatures as it signals the dawn of another day of productive activity, while it causes fear in thieves who would prefer the darkness of the night instead, as well as make lazy people feel uneasy because they would now have to get up and do something, instead of lying idle and wasting away their time in day-dreaming in lethargic manner.

The following verses enumerate the two types of people who are affected by the sun symbolizing the glories and majesty of Lord Ram—i.e. one who feel delighted, and the other who become fearful of the Lord.]

जिन्हि सोक ते कहउँ बखानी । प्रथम अबिद्या निसा नसानी ॥ ३ ॥

अघ उलूक जहँ तहाँ लुकाने । काम क्रोध कैरव सकुचाने ॥ ४ ॥

jinhahi sōka tē kaha'um' bakhānī. prathama abidyā nisā nasānī. 3.
agha ulūka jaham'tahām' lukānē. kāma krōdha kairava sakucānē. 4.

Let me now enumerate those who became agitated and sorrowful with the rise of the glories and majesty of Lord Ram.

To begin with, the darkness represented by ignorance and lack of wisdom suffered, because as soon as the sun rises, the first thing to vanish is the darkness of the night. (3)

Owls symbolized by sins, evil and perversions of all kinds went into hiding. [The owl comes out only in the night; as soon as dawn breaks they go into hiding.]

The white lily flowers symbolizing Kaam (worldly passions, lust and desires) and Krodha (anger) shriveled and closed their petals. [Kaam and Krodha too bowed out and lost their dominance in this world.] (4)

बिबिध कर्म गुन काल सुभाऊ । ए चकोर सुख लहहिं न काऊ ॥ ५ ॥
मत्सर मान मोह मद चोरा । इन्ह कर हुनर न कवनिहुँ ओरा ॥ ६ ॥

bibidha karma guna kāla subhā'ū. ē cakōra sukha lahahim na kā'ū. 5.
matsara māna mōha mada cōrā. inha kara hunara na kavanihum'ōrā. 6.

Different types of worldly deeds and engagements, different types of qualities, different types of adversities and effects of changing time and fortunes, and different types of characters and temperaments of a creature that prevail in this gross, mortal world—all of them are like the Chakor bird (the Indian red-legged partridge) that never feels happy in the presence of the sun. (5)

Other negative factors such as jealousy, pride, ego, arrogance, haughtiness, delusions, infatuations etc. are like the countless thieves who are unable to display their skills and put into effect their nefarious designs (hunara) during the daylight symbolized by the presence of Lord Ram and the shine of his glories and majesty. (6)

धरम तड़ाग ग्यान बिग्याना । ए पंकज बिकसे बिधि नाना ॥ ७ ॥
सुख संतोष बिराग बिबेका । बिगत सोक ए कोक अनेका ॥ ८ ॥

dharama tarāga gyāna bigyānā. ē paṅkaja bikasē bidhi nānā. 7.
sukha santōṣa birāga bibēkā. bigata sōka ē kōka anēkā. 8.

On the other hand, during the glorious reign of Lord Ram, good things and noble virtues flourished. For instance, in the symbolic pond called Dharma (i.e. the virtues of righteousness, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, ethics, morality, goodness of thought and conduct), many lotus flowers representing Gyan and Vigyan (gnosis,

truthful knowledge, wisdom, refined intellect, conscientiousness etc.) began to flourish and bloom in their resplendent finery.

[To wit, during the reign of Lord Ram, good virtues represented by Dharma were firmly established, and as result, Gyan and Vigyan too began to support to flourish and lend their positive influence upon the society.] (7)

Countless birds known as Chakva (the ruddy goose) representing the good virtues of Sukha (happiness, joy), Santosh (contentedness, satisfaction in whatever one has), Vairagya (renunciation, dispassion and detachment from the world and its material charms), and Vivek (wise thinking, wisdom, analytical ability to differentiate between what is right and what is wrong), became delighted and glad that the daylight representing Lord Ram's reign has finally come to eliminate the grief and sadness from which the bird suffered during the darkness of the night.

[The noble virtues listed in this verse flourished during the reign of Lord Ram just like the case of the Chakva bird that feels exhilarant and energized during the day.]¹ (8)

[Note—¹The 'Chakva' is the ruddy goose or an ostrich. This bird feels tormented during the night when the moon shines. On the other hand, it feels exhilarant and energetic in the light of the sun.

There is another bird known as the 'Chakor', i.e. the Indian red-legged partridge. The light of the full moon that appears to torment the Chakva, grants joy to the Chakor. The Chakor feels happy at the sight of the moon, while the Chakva shuns it.

In this metaphor, the reign of Lord Ram is like the daylight when the Chakva bird feels happy. To wit, during Lord Ram's glorious reign, good virtues enumerated in this verse, such as Sukha, Santosh, Vairagya and Vivek, flourished and developed to their best when they found a conducive environment to support and encourage them. When these virtues were practiced by the people, they made them happy and lead a contented life.]

दो०. यह प्रताप रबि जाकें उर जब करइ प्रकास ।

पछिले बाढ़हिं प्रथम जे कहे ते पावहिं नास ॥ ३१ ॥

dōhā.

yaha pratāpa rabi jākēm ura jaba kara'i prakāsa.

pachilē bāḥahim prathama jē kahē tē pāvahim nāsa. 31.

Verily indeed and in all sooth, when the glories of Lord Ram begin to illuminate the heart of an individual, then all the positive virtues listed herein above too begin to grow and get firmly established in that individual (thereby giving the person the rewards that are inherent and natural to them), while all the negative traits enumerated previously begin the gradually fade away and die a natural death (thereby freeing the person from the torments and sorrows and agitations that are natural consequences of these negative traits). (Doha no. 31)

चौ०. भ्रातन्ह सहित रामु एक बारा । संग परम प्रिय पवनकुमारा ॥ १ ॥

सुंदर उपवन देखन गए । सब तरु कुसुमित पल्लव नए ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

bhrātanha sahita rāmu ēka bārā. saṅga parama priya pavanakumārā. 1.
sundara upabana dēkhana ga'ē. saba taru kusumita pallava na'ē. 2.

One day, Lord Ram, along with his brothers and Hanuman, the son of the wind god who was very dear to him (parama priya pavanakumārā), went to pay a visit to the beautiful royal garden which had trees that were all laden with blooming flowers and plush with a cover of green foliage. (1-2)

जानि समय सनकादिक आए । तेज पुंज गुन सील सुहाए ॥ ३ ॥

ब्रह्मानंद सदा लयलीना । देखत बालक बहुकालीना ॥ ४ ॥

jāni samaya sanakādika ā'ē. tēja punja guna sīla suhā'ē. 3.
brahmānanda sadā layalīnā. dēkhata bālaka bahukālīnā. 4.

Finding it as an opportune time to meet Lord Ram, the great celestial sages known as Sankadi (i.e. sage Sanak and others) arrived there (in the royal garden). These sages were radiant with spiritual energy, were a treasury of excellent virtues, and were embodiments of amiability and politeness. (3)

They always remained absorbed in ecstasy that comes with Brahm-realisation (i.e. they were highly enlightened and remained engrossed in the thought of Brahm, the Supreme Being, which granted them a natural sense of bliss and joy).

Though from their physical appearance they appeared to be boy-like (i.e. young in age), but in reality they were aged and ancient sages¹. (4)

[Note—¹The appearance of sages Sankadi as being young boys was actually because they were celibates who remained always cheerful and submerged in bliss of Brahm-realisation, a way of life that had a positive influence on their bodies, making them look eternally young and youthful.

They practiced exemplary self-control over their sense organs and their natural desire for gratification. The net effect of such a self-regulated life marked with complete absence of worry, grief and agitations, and on the other hand remaining blissful and contented, was that they looked eternally young and youthful like adolescent boys. But this physical appearance was very misleading, for in reality they were highly wise, self-realised and enlightened sages who had attained maturity of age and wisdom.]

रूप धरें जनु चारिउ बेदा । समदरसी मुनि बिगत बिभेदा ॥ ५ ॥

आसा बसन व्यसन यह तिन्हहीं । रघुपति चरित होइ तहँ सुनहीं ॥ ६ ॥

rūpa dharēm janu cāri'u bēdā. samadarasī muni bigata bibhēdā. 5.
āsā basana byasana yaha tinahīm. raghupati carita hō'i taham̐ sunahīm. 6.

These sages looked so glorious that it appeared as if the four Vedas had manifested themselves in their forms.

These sages practiced equanimity and dispassion, treating everything equally, and without favour or bias for or against anything or anyone. (5)

The four directions of the sky were like their clothes (i.e. they remained naked, covered only by the sky element that surrounded them from all sides like a covering garment).

They had only one habit and one desire, which was to go and listen to the narration of Lord Ram's stories and attend discourses enumerating the Lord's glories, divinity and majesty, wherever it was being done. (6)

तहाँ रहे सनकादि भवानी । जहँ घटसंभव मुनिबर ग्यानी ॥ ७ ॥

राम कथा मुनिबर बहु बरनी । ग्यान जोनि पावक जिमि अरनी ॥ ८ ॥

tahām̐ rahē sanakādi bhavānī. jaham̐ ghaṭasambhava munibara gyānī. 7.
rāma kathā munibara bahu baranī. gyāna jōni pāvaka jimi aranī. 8.

[Lord Shiva told his consort, goddess Bhavani—] 'Oh Bhavani (bhavānī)! The Sankadi sages were coming back from the place (hermitage) where the wise, self-realised and enlightened sage Agastya (ghaṭasambhava munibara gyānī) lived. (7)

Sage Agastya had narrated many divine and enlightening stories of Lord Ram which produced automatic wisdom and enlightenment in the hearts of sages Sankadi, just like rubbing of two pieces of dry firewood would naturally produce fire². (8)

[Note—¹Lord Shiva's another name is 'Bhava'; hence his consort is called 'Bhavani'.

We must remember that the primary narrator of the story of Lord Ram, known as 'Ram Charit Manas', was Lord Shiva, and he narrated it to goddess Uma or Parvati, whose other name is Bhavani.

²Rubbing two pieces of firewood implies that there were wide ranging and thorough discussions pertaining to Lord Ram between sages Agastya and Sankadi, as a result of which enlightenment and devotion for the Lord sprouted in the heart of Sankadi in a natural way.]

दो०. देखि राम मुनि आवत हरषि दंडवत कीन्ह ।

स्वागत पूँछि पीत पट प्रभु बैठन कहँ दीन्ह ॥ ३२ ॥

dōhā.

dēkhi rāma muni āvata haraṣi daṇḍavata kīnha.

svāgata pūm̐chi pīta paṭa prabhu baiṭhana kaham̐ dīnha. 32.

When Lord Ram saw the Sankadi sages coming to meet him, he felt very glad, and immediately prostrated himself before the great sages to welcome them with due reverence.

The Lord asked them about their welfare and spread his own Pitambar (the gold-coloured silk cloth with which Lord Ram used to cover his body) on the ground, requesting the sages to sit upon it¹. (Doha no. 32)

[Note—¹This is a gesture meant to tell the sages that the Lord held them in high esteem. Normally when a guest arrives, he is offered a seating mat by the host, but to spread one's own shawl on the ground and request the guest to sit upon it is a high form of reverence that the host shows to the guest. Just a while ago, Lord Ram had prostrated himself before the sages, and with this final gesture of offering his own body-wrapping shawl to them to use it as a mat is to tell the sages that the Lord has great respect for them.]

चौ०. कीन्ह दंडवत तीनिउं ज़ाई । सहित पवनसुत सुख अधिकाई ॥ १ ॥

मुनि रघुपति छबि अतुल बिलोकी । भए मगन मन सके न रोकी ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

kīnha daṇḍavata tīni'um' bhā'ī. sahita pavanāsuta sukha adhikā'ī. 1.

muni raghuṇpati chabi atula bilōkī. bha'ē magana mana sakē na rōkī. 2.

Lord Ram's three brothers (Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan) and Hanuman too prostrated before the revered sages, and all of them felt very glad to meet and welcome the sages. (1)

When the sages beheld the divine charm of Lord Ram which was incomparable in its radiance and majesty, they were exhilarated beyond measure, so much so that they could not restrain their mind and heart from being ecstatic. (2)

स्यामल गात सरोरुह लोचन । सुंदरता मंदिर भव मोचन ॥ ३ ॥

एकटक रहे निमेष न लावहिं । प्रभु कर जोरें सीस नवावहिं ॥ ४ ॥

syāmala gāta sarōruha lōcana. suṇḍaratā mandira bhava mōcana. 3.

ēkaṭaka rahē nimēṣa na lāvahiṁ. prabhu kara jōrēm sīsa navāvahiṁ. 4.

Lord Ram had a dark-complexioned body, and he had lotus-like beautiful eyes.

Indeed and in all sooth, the Lord, who was an embodiment of magnificent beauty and divine charm, is also the one who can vanquish the fear arising from the world of transmigration, the fear of remaining trapped in an endless cycle of birth and death. [To wit, Lord Ram grants his devotees liberation from the cycle of birth and death; he grants deliverance to them, and gives their souls eternal peace and beatitude.] (3)

The sages looked at Lord Ram with a fixed gaze as if they were mesmerized at the Lord's sight, so much so that for a while they were unable to move their eyes away from him.

On his part, Lord Ram bowed his head and joined the palms of his hands in a prayerful manner to offer his obeisance to the sages. [To wit, when Lord Ram observed that the sages were looking at him transfixed, he felt extremely humbled. He bowed his head and joined his palms to show respect to the sages, with a subtle request to the sages to please spare him from further embarrassment by gazing at him with unmoving eyes.] (4)

तिन्ह कै दसा देखि रघुबीरा । स्रवत नयन जल पुलक सरीरा ॥ ५ ॥
कर गहि प्रभु मुनिबर बैठारे । परम मनोहर बचन उचारे ॥ ६ ॥

tinha kai dasā dēkhi raghubīrā. sravata nayana jala pulaka sarīrā. 5.
kara gahi prabhu munibara baiṭhārē. parama manōhara bacana ucārē. 6.

When Lord Ram observed the ecstatic condition of the sages (Sankadi), with tears were rolling down their eyes and their bodies filled with thrill, the Lord too felt the same way, for tears rolled down his eyes and his body became thrilled too. (5)

Lord Ram stepped forward, and holding the exalted sages by his hands he made them sit down.

When they were seated, the Lord addressed them very sweetly as follows—
(6)

आजु धन्य मैं सुनहु मुनीसा । तुम्हरेँ दरस जाहिं अघ खीसा ॥ ७ ॥
बड़े भाग पाइब सतसंगा । बिनहिं प्रयास होहिं भव भंगा ॥ ८ ॥

āju dhan'ya mair̥ sunahu munīsā. tumharēm darasa jāhim agha khīsā. 7.
barē bhāga pā'iba satasaṅgā. binahim prayāsa hōhim bhava bhaṅgā. 8.

Lord Ram said to the Sankadi sages: 'Oh great sages! I am very fortunate and feeling blessed today to have the opportunity to see your holy selves, for your mere sight is redeeming as it destroys all sins and their horrifying consequences. (7)

One is extremely lucky to have the chance to be in the company of true saints, for it is a very blessed opportunity that enables a person to break free the cycle of birth and death very easily and find deliverance from its vice-like grip, without the person having to make any special effort for it¹. (8)

[Note—¹Lord Ram has glorified saints and their virtues elsewhere also in Ram Charit Manas—viz. Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 37—to Doha no. 38.]

दो०. संत संग अपबर्ग कर कामी भव कर पंथ ।

कहहिं संत कबि कोबिद श्रुति पुरान सदग्रंथ ॥ ३३ ॥

dōhā.

santa saṅga apabarga kara kāmī bhava kara pantha.
kahahim̐ santa kabi kōbida śruti purāna sadagrantha. 33.

Communion with saints paves the way for liberation and deliverance from the trap of birth and death¹, while contact with people who are lustful, desiring pleasures of the material world and gratification of their sense organs leads one to getting trapped in the cycle of transmigration².

This is a universal and irrefutable truth that is endorsed and reiterated by pious and wise people, those who are learned and well-versed in such things, as well as the Vedas, the Purans and other holy scriptures that speak the truth and show the correct path to be followed for attaining redemption, emancipation and salvation³. (Doha no. 33)

[Note—¹Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 61 along with Chaupai line nos. 4-5, 8 that precede it;.

²Refer to: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 39.

³Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 41.]

चौ०. सुनि प्रभु बचन हरषि मुनि चारी । पुलकित तन अस्तुति अनुसारी ॥ १ ॥

जय भगवंत अनंत अनामय । अनघ अनेक एक करुनामय ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

sunī prabhu bacana haraṣi muni cārī. pulakita tana astuti anusārī. 1.
jaya bhagavanta ananta anāmaya. anagha anēka ēka karunāmaya. 2.

Hearing the polite words of Lord Ram, the four sages (i.e. the Sankadi sages) felt exhilarated. They began to pray to Lord Ram with a thrilled body. (1)

The Sankadi sages said: ‘Glory to the Supreme Lord who is infinite and has no end, who has no faults and shortcomings, who is sinless and immaculate, who manifests himself in multitude of forms but essentially remains one and the same¹, and who is an embodiment of mercy, compassion and kindness. (2)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 13; (b) Kishkindha Kand, (ii) Doha no. 3; (c) Lanka Kand, (iii) Doha no. 14—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 15.]

जय निर्गुन जय जय गुन सागर । सुख मंदिर सुंदर अति नागर ॥ ३ ॥

जय इंदिरा रमन जय भूधर । अनुपम अज अनादि सोभाकर ॥ ४ ॥

jaya nirguna jaya jaya guna sāgara. sukha mandira sundara ati nāgara. 3.
jaya indirā ramana jaya bhūdhara. anupama aja anādi sōbhākara. 4.

Glory to the Lord (Ram) who is free from the effects of all the three worldly qualities (of Sata Guna, Raja Guna and Tama Guna), as well as all attributes that are related to the gross mortal world!

Glory to the Lord (Ram) who is an ocean of all the excellent virtues and noble characters imaginable!

Glory to the Lord (Ram) who is a beautiful temple or a blissful abode of joy and happiness (i.e. who grants bliss and beatitude, happiness and joy to all those who come to the Lord to seek his blessings)!

Glory to the Lord (Ram) who is very wise, erudite, sagacious and judicious!
(3)

Glory to Lord Ram who is the dear Lord of Laxmi, the goddess of wealth, prosperity and well-being (indirā ramana)!

Glory to Lord Ram who sustains and supports the earth and all its creatures!

Glory to Lord Ram who has no parallel, who cannot be compared with anyone else as he is peerless, who has no birth as he is eternal and imperishable, who predates everything in this creation, and who is a mine of magnificence, grace, majesty and elegance! (4)

ग्यान निधान अमान मानप्रद । पावन सुजस पुरान बेद बद ॥ ५ ॥

तग्य कृतग्य अग्यता भंजन । नाम अनेक अनाम निरंजन ॥ ६ ॥

gyāna nidhāna amāna mānaprada. pāvana sujasa purāna bēda bada. 5.
tagya kṛtagya agyatā bhanjana. nāma anēka anāma niranjana. 6.

Glory to Lord Ram who is a treasure house of wisdom, gnosis, knowledge, both of the secular kind as well as of the spiritual kind!

Glory to Lord Ram who has no desire to be honoured or glorified, but he grants honours and glories to others (such as his devotees)!

The Vedas and the Purans (ancient scriptures) laud the Lord's excellent glories and pay tributes to his majesty by way of singing hymns in his honour! (5)

Lord Ram knows and understands the deepest meaning and the subtlest truth of all things, and is well-versed in the minutest details of the principles of metaphysics, theology, spiritualism and secularism.

Lord Ram acknowledges the smallest of service done to him, and is an eliminator of ignorance and delusions.

Oh Lord Ram, thou art free from all delusions and taints of all shades!

Oh Lord Ram, there are countless names by which thou art known, but essentially there is no name that can be said to be thy real name (for all names apply to thee equally, and at the same time none of them can be said to thy true name). [This is because every name has a particular meaning and relates to a specific attribute of a person, and therefore each name defines a particular quality and attributes of yours.

But none of the names can define you completely, for you are beyond definition and are without attributes.] (6)

सर्व सर्वगत सर्व उरालय । बससि सदा हम कहूँ परिपालय ॥ ७ ॥

द्वंद्व बिपति भव फंद बिभंजय । हृदि बसि राम काम मद गंजय ॥ ८ ॥

sarba sarbagata sarba urālaya. basasi sadā hama kahum̐ paripālaya. 7.
dvanda bipati bhava phanda bibhanjaya. hṛdi basi rāma kāma mada ganjaya.
8.

Oh Lord Ram, you have manifested yourself in all forms, visible and invisible, animate and inanimate, in his creation—i.e. everything and every creature in this creation is one or the other form of your own self. [This is because Lord Ram is the Supreme Being, known as Brahm in the words of the Upanishads, and the entire creation, from the minutest to the most colossus, is a manifestation of Brahm.]

Oh Lord Ram, it is you who pervades and live inside the entire creation in a uniform and subtle way as the Atma, the pure consciousness that gives life to this creation. [Without the Atma, the world is dead. From the perspective of metaphysics, Lord Ram is the cosmic Consciousness or the Supreme Atma that makes its presence felt in all living beings as the individual's Atma, or the individual creature's 'true self' which is pure consciousness, for the 'true self' of the creature is not his gross mortal body.]

Therefore oh Lord Ram, please protect, support and take care of us (for thou art the true Lord of this creation, and it is thee who support and protect our lives from within us by living in our inner-self as the pure conscious Atma, because if the Atma leaves the body, the latter would be dead). (7)

Oh Lord Ram, thou art the destroyer or eliminator of all kinds of doubts and uncertainties that torment a creature.

Oh Lord Ram, please be gracious to free us from the shackles of birth and death, as well as fear from adversities, misery, grief, distress and misfortunes that are inherent to this mortal gross world.

Oh Lord Ram, please make our inner-self as thy holy abode, and clean our inner-selves from within by removing all taints such as Kaam and Mada (passions, lust, desires, arrogance, haughtiness, pride etc. respectively) that undermine the purity of our character as well as darken the natural shine and glory of our Atma.¹ (8)

[Note—¹It is easy to understand what sages Sankadi are requesting Lord Ram by taking a simple example. Suppose there is a dark room. There are two ways to illuminate it—one is to open its windows and let the light from the outside come in, and the other way is to light a lamp inside the room itself and place it in the center. It is very obvious that the room will be better and more uniformly illuminated in the latter case as compared to the former case.

Hence, it is better to enshrine Lord Ram as a deity consecrated in a temple symbolised by our hearts so that the lamp of holiness, piety and purity that is lit within us is able to light our inner-self and remove all traces of darkness from within, as compared to worshipping Lord Ram and glorifying him in the outside world as a deity consecrated in a physical temple. One has to visit a temple to enjoy its

auspicious and spiritual environment, but when that temple exists inside our own self, it goes everywhere we go, making it possible for us to enjoy the same auspiciousness and spiritual environment from very close quarters at all times of our lives, day in and day out.]

दो०. परमानंद कृपायतन मन परिपूरन काम ।
प्रेम भगति अनपायनी देहु हमहि श्रीराम ॥ ३४ ॥

dōhā.

paramānanda kṛpāyatana mana paripūrana kāma.
prēma bhagati anapāyanī dēhu hamahi śrīrāma. 34.

Sages Sankadi said: ‘Oh Lord Ram! Thou art an embodiment of supreme bliss, thou art an abode of kindness, compassion and mercy, and thou fulfills all desires of thy devotees.

Oh gracious Lord Ram, therefore we request thee to bless us by granting us the boon of having an eternal and never-diminishing affection, love and devotion for thee.¹’ (Doha no. 34)

[Note—¹Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 107 (sage Bharadwaj); (b) Aranya Kand, (ii) Chaupai line no. 13 that precedes Doha no. 10; (iii) Chaupai line no. 26 that precedes Doha no. 11 (sage Sutekshan); (iv) Chaupai line nos. 10-11 that precede Doha no. 13 (sage Agastya).]

चौ०. देहु भगति रघुपति अति पावनि । त्रिबिधि ताप भव दाप नसावनि ॥ १ ॥
प्रनत काम सुरधेनु कलपतरु । होइ प्रसन्न दीजै प्रभु यह बरु ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

dēhu bhagati raghupati ati pāvani. tribidhi tāpa bhava dāpa nasāvani. 1.
pranata kāma suradhēnu kalapataru. hō’i prasanna dījai prabhu yaha baru. 2.

Sankadi sages reiterated: ‘Oh Lord Ram (raghupati)! We earnestly beg you to bless us so that we are bestowed with the boon of having an eternal, steady and abiding devotion for you, because this virtue known as ‘devotion for Lord Ram’ is the purest, the most eclectic, the holiest and the most auspicious form of boon that one can ever expect to be granted in this world¹. It is able to eliminate all the three types of torments and miseries² associated with the cycle of life and death in this mortal world, and it removes all fears and consternations related to them. (1)

Oh Lord Ram! Thou art like the all wish-fulfilling Tree of heaven called ‘Kalpa Taru’, as well as the heavenly Holy Cow known as ‘Kaamdhenu’ that too grants anything one seeks from it, because thou fulfills all wishes and desires of those who take shelter with thee, and surrender themselves before thine auspicious and holy Self. (2)

[Note—¹The saintly crow Kaagbhusund too had asked Lord Ram to grant him only this boon, and no other kind of boons, when the Lord was ready to give him whatever he wished to have. The Lord had already blessed Kaagbhusund with a variety of boons, but the Lord cleverly stopped short of granting him the virtue of ‘devotion’, perhaps to test Kaagbhusund’s wisdom, as well as his faith and dedication to the Lord. Kaagbhusund thought that though Lord Ram was ready to grant him everything he wished, but the Lord didn’t mention ‘devotion’ in the list of boons he was ready to grant him. So, Kaagbhusund immediately asked Lord Ram that if he indeed wants to grant the former anything, then the only thing he wants from the Lord is ‘devotion for Lord Ram’ and nothing else. This submission of the saintly crow pleased Lord Ram mightily, and the Lord was very impressed with Kaagbhusund’s wisdom and sagacity, so much so that the Lord openly expressed his appreciation of Kaagbhusund and praised him for his wisdom, erudition and sagacity. The Lord himself told Kaagbhusund that what he has asked for, i.e. ‘to have devotion for Lord Ram’, is the wisest and the best decision of his life, and then the Lord goes on to enumerate the many auspicious benefits and spiritual rewards that ‘devotion’ brings to his devotees.

This event is narrated in detail in: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 83—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 88.

Earlier, Lord Ram had granted this boon of ‘devotion’ to sage Sutikshan in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 26 that precedes Doha no. 11.

Sage Agastya too had sought this boon of ‘devotion’ in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 9-10 that precede Doha no. 13.

Even sage Atri has lauded the glories of the virtue of ‘devotion for Lord Ram’ in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chanda line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 6.

Lord Ram has also advised Sabari that devotion for him was one of the nine paths leading to liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation of a creature.

And finally, sage Narad was given a similar advice by Lord Ram in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 10 that precedes Doha no. 43.

²The three causes for all types of torments and miseries in this world are the following: (i) Daihik – related to one’s body, such as sickness; (ii) Bhautik –related to this world, such as from other creatures, enemies, natural calamities, etc.; and (iii) Daivik –related to malignant stars, evil spirits and antagonized gods etc. that cause unwarranted and insurmountable problems for a person.]

भव बारिधि कुंभज रघुनायक । सेवत सुलभ सकल सुख दायक ॥ ३ ॥

मन संभव दारुन दुख दारय । दीनबंधु समता बिस्तारय ॥ ४ ॥

bhava bāridhi kumbhaja raghunāyaka. sēvata sulabha sakala sukha dāyaka.

3.

mana sambhava dārūna dukha dāraya. dīnabandhu samatā bistāraya. 4.

Oh Lord Ram (raghunāyaka)! Thou art like sage Agastya with respect to drying up the vast ocean representing the endless cycle of birth and death¹, and service to thee is a panacea that grants a creature an easy access to all kinds of joy and happiness in this world. (3)

Oh Lord, thou art an eternal friend of those who are humble, distressed and lowly (dīnabandhu)! Please eliminate all sorrows and miseries that have their origin in our minds and hearts (by calming them down and giving our mind and hearts stability and peace).

Oh gracious Lord! Please enhance the uniformity, stability and tranquility of our minds so that we develop the virtue of equanimity, equality and forbearance under all circumstances in our lives. (4)

[Note—¹Sage Agastya had once gulped the whole ocean and dried it up. In this parallel, Lord Ram, like sage Agastya, dries up the vast ocean symbolized by the endless cycle of birth and death that stands between the creature and his ultimate attainment of emancipation and salvation that would grant his soul eternal peace, rest, bliss, beatitude and felicity.

To wit, by serving Lord Ram and having devotion for him, his devotees are able to easily attain liberation and deliverance from the cycle of transmigration to attain emancipation and salvation, leading to their soul finding eternal bliss, peace, rest, beatitude and felicity.]

आस त्रास इरिषादि निवारक । बिनय बिबेक बिरति बिस्तारक ॥ ५ ॥
भूप मौलि मनि मंडन धरनी । देहि भगति संसृति सरि तरनी ॥ ६ ॥

āsa trāsa iriṣādi nivāraka. binaya bibēka birati bistāraka. 5.

bhūpa mauḷi maṇi maṇḍana dharanī. dēhi bhagati sansṛti sari taranī. 6.

Oh Lord Ram, thou art the eliminator of all sorts of torments, miseries and fears arising from the negative trait of having jealousy and envy with others in this world.

Oh Lord Ram, thou art an enhancer of the grand positive virtues of politeness and goodness, of wisdom, erudition and sagacity, as well as renunciation, dispassion and detachment from this artificial material world. (5)

Oh Lord Ram, thou are the most exalted Lord and a King-Emperor of all the Kings and Rulers in this world (bhūpa mauḷi).

Oh Lord Ram, thou art like a jewel that adorns this earth (maṇi maṇḍana dharanī)! Please grant us the boon of ‘devotion for thee’ which acts like a boat (or barge) that is able to take a creature across the turbulent and churning waters of a river symbolized by this world of transmigration.

[To wit, this river is terrifying to behold, and it would drown anybody who tries to cross it. But oh Lord, devotion for thee is such a sturdy and robust boat that it makes sure that all those who board it are safely taken across the turbulent waters of this symbolic river to the other side, so that they are able to escape being drowned and sucked in the whirlpool of birth and death, with their attendant horrors and miseries. Those who have devotion for Lord Ram find deliverance by being able to cross over this river representing the endless cycle of birth and death to find emancipation and salvation for themselves.] (6)

मुनि मन मानस हंस निरंतर । चरन कमल बंदित अज संकर ॥ ७ ॥

रघुकुल केतु सेतु श्रुति रच्छक । काल करम सुभाउ गुन भच्छक ॥ ८ ॥
तारन तरन हरन सब दूषन । तुलसिदास प्रभु त्रिभुवन भूषन ॥ ९ ॥

muni mana mānasa hansa nirantara. carana kamala bandita aja saṅkara. 7.
raghukula kētu sētu śruti racchaka. kāla karama subhā'u guna bhacchaka. 8.
tārana tarana harana saba dūṣana. tulasidāsa prabhu tribhuvana bhūṣana. 9.

Oh Lord Ram, thou art like a divine Swan that permanently floats in the clean and purified lake represented by the heart and the mind of saintly and pious people.

Thine auspicious and holy lotus-like feet are worshipped by Brahma, the creator, and Lord Shiva, the concluder of this creation. (7)

Oh Lord Ram, thou art a flag bearer of the glory and majesty of the illustrious line of kings descending from the ancient King Raghu of Ayodhya (raghukula kētu)!

Oh Lord Ram, thou art a protector and upholder of the auspicious path shown by the Vedas—i.e. thou art a supporter, a protector, a proponent and a practitioner of the tenets of the Vedas and other ancient scriptures.

Oh Lord Ram, thou art an eliminator of the negative effects of Kaal (time, especially misfortunes), Karma (evil consequences of bad deeds done by a creature), Nature (the natural habits and temperaments of a person that tend to make him think in the wrong direction, and also make him swerve towards doing evil things), and the three Gunas (i.e. the three natural qualities of Sata Guna, Raja Guna and Tama Guna that are present in all living beings in varying proportions, and together they decide a person's attitude, behaviour, character and way of thinking). [To wit, Lord Ram neutralizes the negative consequences of all these things.] (8)

Oh Lord Ram, thou art a boat thyself and act as a boat for thy devotees too for the purpose of crossing over the vast symbolic ocean of transmigration that this gross mundane world represents.

Oh Lord Ram, thou art an eliminator of all faults and vices that act as taints and shackles for a creature.'

[Finally, Tulsidas, the saintly poet who penned this divine Story of Lord Ram which we are reading now, concludes narrating the prayers offered to Lord Ram by Sankadi sages by saying something for himself as follows—] 'Oh Lord Ram, thou art an ornament of all the three divisions of this creation¹, as well as of Tulsidas.' (9)

[Note—¹The three divisions of this world are—the heaven, the earth, and the nether or the subterranean world. It also refers to the past, the present and the future.]

दो०. बार बार अस्तुति करि प्रेम सहित सिरु नाइ ।

ब्रह्म भवन सनकादि गे अति अभीष्ट बर पाइ ॥ ३५ ॥

dōhā.

bāra bāra astuti kari prēma sahita siru nā'i.

brahma bhavana sanakādi gē ati abhīṣṭa bara pā'i. 35.

Sages Sankadi prayed to Lord Ram repeatedly in the aforesaid manner, and then, having received the Lord's blessings that granted them what they dearly desired (which was the boon of having devotion for Lord Ram), they finally bowed before the Lord most affectionately, and then departed for the abode of Brahma, i.e. they went back to heaven from where they had come to visit and pay their obeisance to Lord Ram (brahma bhavana). (Doha no. 35)

चौ०. सनकादिक बिधि लोक सिधाए । भ्रातन्ह राम चरन सिरु नाए ॥ १ ॥
 पूछत प्रभुहि सकल सकुचाहीं । चितवहिं सब मारुतसुत पाहीं ॥ २ ॥
 सुनी चहहिं प्रभु मुख कै बानी । जो सुनि होइ सकल भ्रम हानी ॥ ३ ॥

caupāī.

sanakādika bidhi lōka sidhā'ē. bhrātanha rāma carana siru nā'ē. 1.
 pūchata prabhuhi sakala sakucāhīm. citavahim saba mārutasuta pāhīm. 2.
 sunī cahahim prabhu mukha kai bānī. jō suni hō'i sakala bhrama hānī. 3.

After Sankadi sages went back to the abode of Brahma, the creator, the three brothers of Lord Ram (viz. Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan) bowed their heads at the feet of Lord Ram. (1)

They wanted to ask some questions from the Lord, but felt hesitant to do so. Hence, they looked at Hanuman, the son of the wind-god (to speak to the Lord on their behalf)¹. (2)

The three brothers wished to hear Lord Ram speak on certain matters as the Lord's discourse was always enlightening, for the Lord's wise words clarified all things, thereby removing all shades of doubts and confusions in the mind of those who listened to his words. (3)

[Note—¹The brothers of Lord Ram knew very well that Hanuman was very close and dear to the Lord, the Lord trusted him, and he was the Lord's confidante and devotee who had established a personal bond with the Lord that others lacked, as a result of which Hanuman could speak to Lord Ram without any hesitation and having to observe formalities like others.

It was an excuse by the Lord himself, because Lord Ram is the inspirer of all, so that he can get an opportunity to expound upon the eclectic principles that define who true saints are, and how one can distinguish them from non-saints. In the disguise, the Lord outlined the tenets of Dharma which govern a person's rightful conduct and thought, and which ultimately makes him a perfect human being who is worthy of adoration and respect, and whose example is followed by others to lead a life that is auspicious, righteous, noble, ethical, pious and holy.

It will be noted that the characters of saints that the Lord enumerated resonate perfectly with those of his devotees, and hence such saints become very dear to Lord Ram. These saints and devotees are the Lord's true friends.

These saints act as flag-bearers of the laws of Dharma (thought and conduct that are righteous, auspicious, noble, proper, ethical, moral, holy and pious), and they act as a steady beacon of light to show the rest of the world how a person can actually lead a noble and pious life in practice inspite of being surrounded by all the vexations,

intransigence, misfortunes and vagaries of mundane life in this material world. Inculcating and practicing the grand virtues of saints will make a man perfect, and entitle him to attain the glories and honour that come with having attained an exalted state of existence which is even envied by the Gods, and which is hereby praised by the Supreme Being himself. Its attainment makes a man blissful and contented, externally and internally, and fit for liberation and deliverance from this mortal world of uncountable miseries and torments.

So, when Lord Ram's three brothers, Bharat, Laxman and Shatrughan, along with Hanuman and others gathered around the Lord he realised that they wished to ask something that would remove all their misconceptions and doubts, but were hesitating to do so. The Lord himself broke the ice, and took the initiative to motivate them to ask what they wished to know.]

अंतरजामी प्रभु सभ जाना । बूझत कहहु काह हनुमाना ॥ ४ ॥
जोरि पानि कह तब हनुमंता । सुनहु दीनदयाल भगवंता ॥ ५ ॥
नाथ भरत कछु पूँछन चहहीं । प्रस्न करत मन सकुचत अहहीं ॥ ६ ॥

antarajāmī prabhu sabha jānā. būjhata kahahu kāha hanumānā. 4.
jōri pāni kaha taba hanumantā. sunahu dīnadayāla bhagavantā. 5.
nātha bharata kachu pūm̐chana cahahīm. prasna karata mana sakucata
ahahīm. 6.

Lord Ram, who knows the internal feelings and thoughts of all as he is omniscient and all-knowing, asked Hanuman—‘Well Hanuman, what do you want to ask?’¹ (4)

Then Hanuman joined his palms in humility and as a mark of respect, and replied—‘Oh the merciful and gracious Lord, listen. (5)

Lord, Bharat wishes to ask you some questions. But he is hesitant to do so (because he does not want to disturb you and is uncertain whether you are willing to answer them). [So, please grant him your permission.]’ (6)

[Note—¹It is noteworthy here that the Lord has asked Hanuman what he wished to know, instead of directly saying “who amongst you wish to know anything; go ahead and ask me”. This is because Hanuman was his closest follower, aide, server, devotee and friend since his days in the forest and the conquest of Lanka. It was Hanuman whom the Lord had summoned prior to the departure of the search parties sent to find where Sita was, and the Lord had confided in him certain secrets known to no one else so that Hanuman would convince Sita about the authenticity of his identity when he met her.

{Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Kishkindha Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 9-11 that precede Doha no. 23; (b) Sundar Kand, (ii) Doha no. 13 along with Chaupai line no. 10 that precedes it; (iii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 14; (iv) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 16—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 17.}

The Lord was very comfortable talking with Hanuman whom Lord Ram had become accustomed to directly issue instructions and talk since their contact in Kishkindha. Any time the Lord needed help, he always thought of Hanuman. For instance—(i) When Laxman was injured in the battle-field of Lanka and the Lord needed help to bring a medicine man, and then to go, search and bring the relevant herb from northern mountains, he thought of no one else but Hanuman*1. (ii) After the conquest of the demon army, it was Hanuman who was asked by the Lord to go and inform Sita about the victory*2. (iii) When the Lord was near Ayodhya on his return after the victory of Lanka, he had chosen Hanuman to go and inform Bharat and the rest of the citizens about the Lord's arrival*3.

{Refer: Ram Charit Manas, *1 = Lanka Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 55; (ii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 56.

*2 = Lanka Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 107; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 2-4 that precede Doha no. 108.

*3 = Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 121.}

It is matter of practical observation that a person feels free to talk to his personal secretary on many matters which he thinks twice to discuss with others, even his own family members. It is a routine affair in the world that a personal aide has the closest access to a powerful man as compared to even his own kith and kin. This applied to the relationship between Lord Ram and Hanuman too. The strength of the bondage of affection between the two can be gauged by the fact that Lord Ram has himself openly declared that he will remain ever indebted to Hanuman for the rest of his life.

{Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Sundar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 32—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 33; (b) Lanka Kand, (ii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 62.}

Hanuman was also extremely close to Sita too, the divine consort of Lord Ram, so much so that she has declared him to be her 'son', an honour no one else was given.

{Refer—Ram Charit Manas, (a) Sundar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 16; (ii) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 17; (b) Lanka Kand, (iii) Doha no. 107 along with Chanda line nos. 1-4 that precede it.}

There was another very important reason that should not be overlooked as to why Lord Ram asked Hanuman to be free to tell him what he wanted to ask. The Lord must have felt that the people of Ayodhya, including his bothers, were skeptical over the Lord's dependence on Hanuman, and harboured doubts as to the level of intelligence, knowledge and wisdom that Hanuman possessed which had made the Lord prefer him over others. Lord Ram wished to remove this doubt—and he used this opportunity to do so. When he asked Hanuman what was that he wished to know, Hanuman would have normally replied that he wanted such and such thing clarified. But no, Hanuman had no doubts about anything as he was the wisest individual in existence. The scriptures have unanimously extolled his wisdom, level of realisation and enlightenment by saying that he stands first in the ranks of such individuals. Therefore, Hanuman did not ask any question himself—as he had nothing to ask in the first place! Only those who do not know ask questions; those who know everything first hand do not. That is why Hanuman says that 'Bharat wished to know certain things'.

Now therefore we see why Lord Ram had preferred to ask Hanuman instead of any of the others present there—the Lord wished to give the signal that no one should be misled by Hanuman's physical appearance of a monkey, for he was

enlightenment personified. And besides this, the Lord also signaled that Hanuman is the only one who has the guts to face and talk with the Supreme Being directly when even his other closest followers could not gather courage to do it.]

तुम्ह जानहु कपि मोर सुभाऊ । भरतहि मोहि कछु अंतर काऊ ॥ ७ ॥
सुनि प्रभु बचन भरत गहे चरना । सुनहु नाथ प्रनतारति हरना ॥ ८ ॥

tumha jānahu kapi mōra subhā'ū. bharatahi mōhi kachu antara kā'ū. 7.
suni prabhu bacana bharata gahē caranā. sunahu nātha pranatāratī haranā.
8.

Lord Ram replied—‘Listen Kapi (literally meaning monkey; here referring to Hanuman)! You are aware of my nature—that there is no difference between me and Bharat. [In other words, I hold Bharat very dear to my heart. So he should not fear or have any kind of hesitation in asking me anything. There is no need of an intermediary. I will never take offence at anything Bharat says to me.]¹ (7)

When Bharat heard these words of the Lord, he fell down and caught hold of the Lord’s august feet. He pleaded—‘Listen Lord who eliminates all the sorrows and miseries of those who have taken shelter in your holy feet². (8)

[Note—¹Now, the Lord is a great diplomat and statesman par excellence. He thought to himself—“Well, Bharat has suffered so much for me while I was in the forest exile, he had forsaken the right to the throne just for my sake. It is out of etiquette and decorum that he prefers to not directly face me as he is not sure whether I am in the mood to reply questions, and would get annoyed instead. So he preferred to prod Hanuman to open the conversation. I must not give a wrong signal to Bharat that I would have got annoyed if he had asked anything directly, assuming that Bharat is trying to test my knowledge.”

So the Lord told Hanuman that Bharat is very dear to him. There was no reason why Bharat should feel reluctant to ask him anything he wished, even if the question is unconventional and odd because it is sure that he (Lord Ram) would never take offence at whatever Bharat says.

There are numerous instances in Ram Charit Manas where the love and mutual trust between Lord Ram and Bharat has been highlighted. The Lord had even gone to the extent of assuring Bharat that “I (Ram) is willing to do what Bharat says” in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 264.

Lord Ram has greatly lauded Bharat and upheld the latter’s purity of Atma, devotion, noble character and virtuous qualities in express terms, saying that Bharat was an expert in the laws of Dharma, in public relations, in the knowledge of the Vedas and in how devotion for the Lord can be developed—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 304.

Once again, when Laxman got annoyed at the news of Bharat’s arrival at Chitrakoot, it was Lord Ram who calmed him down, and on that occasion the Lord had extensively praised Bharat, saying in effect that Bharat is incomparable in the whole creation, and no one is more righteous, noble, virtuous, pious and holy than him. Refer—Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 231—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 133.

The glory of Bharat is no ordinary one—Lord Ram knows it but it is so profound and immense in its dimension and intensity that the Lord himself finds it difficult to explain or narrate it fully—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2, 5 that precede Doha no. 289.

Bharat knew that the Lord loved him more than anyone else because during their childhood days the Lord used to willfully lose the game so that Bharat could win. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 260 where Bharat told Lord Ram that: “Oh Lord, during our childhood days, you would never find fault in the way I played games with you, and you would voluntarily lose a game so that I felt happy at winning. Then, I have never left your company since my childhood, and you have never made me unhappy by not fulfilling my desires or in anyway doing anything that would ever make me unhappy or sad.”

At this, Lord Ram assured Bharat of his unflinching faith in him—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 263—to Doha no. 264.

Lord Ram had great confidence in Bharat. In this context, refer to Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Doha no. 164, and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 264 where the Lord expressly tells Bharat that he has great hesitation in even thinking twice about not keeping Bharat’s wishes, i.e. he is eager to uphold all that Bharat says, especially when their Guru, sage Vasistha has himself endorsed Bharat’s integrity and wisdom.

On his part, Bharat has acknowledged this fact that Lord Ram loves him so much that the latter is ready to go back on his vows and break his words if Bharat so wishes and tells him to do so—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 266.

It was indeed a fine example of wonderful mutual trust and affection that existed between two loving brothers, Lord Ram and Bharat.

Bharat knew that Lord Ram always keeps the wishes of his followers and devotees—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 219 wherein Brahma, the patriarch of creation, tells Indra, the king of Gods, that “Lord Ram always keeps the wishes of his devotees and followers; the scriptures such as the Vedas and the Purans, as well as great saints and gods are witness to it”.

Bharat also knew that Lord Ram would never get angry at him; the Lord loved Bharat more than anyone else. This fact has been endorsed at a number of places in Ram Charit Manas. For instance, it is clearly stated in Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 234 that “when Bharat recalled the (affable, loving, forgiving, compassionate and merciful) nature of Lord Ram, his steps became very brisk as he moved swiftly to meet the Lord (because he was sure that he will be warmly welcomed by the Lord and not rebuked, scolded and turned away)”. This occasion was Bharat approaching the hermitage of the Lord in Chitrakoot where the latter was living during his forest exile, and Bharat had come to ask for forgiveness and request the Lord to come back to Ayodhya.

Then again, in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 241 it is asserted that “the ethereal love between Lord Ram and Bharat was of such purity, density and intensity that none of the three Gods of the Trinity, i.e. Vidhi (Brahma), Hari (Vishnu) and Har (Shiva), could ever imagine or dream of it (measure it) in their mind”.

²Bharat felt embarrassed. He fell down at the Lord's feet to pay his obeisance and respect to him, and to convey the message that he is very thankful at the Lord's observation that he loves Bharat dearly.]

दो०. नाथ न मोहि संदेह कछु सपनेहुँ सोक न मोह ।
केवल कृपा तुम्हारिहि कृपानंद संदोह ॥ ३६ ॥

dōhā.

nātha na mōhi sandēha kachu sapanēhum' sōka na mōha.
kēvala krpā tumhārihi krpānanda sandōha. 36.

Lord, I have no doubts, nor do I have any kind of sorrows and delusions even in my dreams. Oh the merciful Lord; it is all because of your benevolence and grace upon me. (Doha no. 36)

[Note—The observations made in note of Chaupai line nos. 6 and 7 are evident here. The Lord had never said that Bharat has these spiritual faults in him. He had merely asked what Hanuman wished to know, and then the latter said that Bharat wished to clarify certain things. No where any mention has been made about who had sorrows or delusions or the like. This clearly shows the reason why Bharat was reluctant to ask the Lord directly—because he thought that as soon as he says that he wished to ask something, the Lord will immediately deduce that he has doubts and delusions. So Bharat was kind of self-conscious, and he begins to give clarifications about his guilt even without anyone ever questioning his integrity or level of knowledge and wisdom.

Well, if he had no problems, why then did he venture to ask anything at all? The answer to this is that Lord Ram wished to preach or teach the rest of the world some eclectic principles of Dharma, about a holy and pious way of life. So he was the one, being the supreme Inspirer, to inspire Bharat to ask a question that would be of immense benefit for the rest of the world.

Bharat goes on to ask the Lord about the fabulous virtues of saints and holy people, and also those of non-saints and fallen people so that a clear comparison can be made. This will help the creatures of the world at large to differentiate between which virtue to accept and which quality to reject in their own lives. The very fact that all the glorious virtues of saints and pious people that are listed by Lord Ram now were indeed present in Bharat, making the latter a true saint and pious individual is fully and whole heartedly endorsed by sage Bharadwaj as well as the presiding deity of the holy pilgrim place known as Triveni in Ayodhya Kand.

In Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 205 along with Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede it, the presiding deity of Triveni has praised Bharat and called him a 'Sadhu' or a saintly and pious person.

In Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 30, and (ii) Doha no. 205, we read that the gods have showered flowers upon Bharat to show their appreciation of him, as well as to honour him and pay their respects to him.

In Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Doha no. 207—to Doha no. 208, and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precede Doha no. 210 we read that sage Bharadwaj

has praised Bharat lavishly, saying that Lord Ram loved him like no one else in this world.

Similarly, the sages and hermits who lived in the forest of Chitrakoot have blessed Bharat and were extremely pleased at his devotion for Lord Ram as well as his personal character that was exemplarily pious, holy and virtuous—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-7 that precede Doha no. 312.

The whole world had great respect for Bharat—refers: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya, Doha no. 326 along with Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes it.

The wisest king of the time, king Janak, had proclaimed that the deeds of Bharat and his story is spiritually powerful enough to help the creature to break free from the fetters of worldly delusions and attachments as Bharat is a personified form of the eclectic and glorious virtues of devotion, dedication, renunciation and dispassion etc. so much lauded and extolled by the scriptures—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 288.

Bharat is not touched by any kind of delusion, deceit, wickedness and other evil characters associated with this world so much so that even the enlightened king Janak too has praised him in laudatory terms in: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 288—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 289.

The glory of Bharat is no ordinary one—Lord Ram knows it but it is so profound and immense in its dimension and intensity that the Lord himself finds it difficult to explain or narrate it fully—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2, 5 that precede Doha no. 289.

That said, it now becomes absolutely clear that Bharat was speaking the truth when he says that he has no doubts and delusions. And it also shows that Lord Ram himself had no doubt that Bharat had them—for the Lord loved Bharat dearly, and the Lord does not love anyone who is sinful, corrupt, evil and lacks proper virtues as well as wisdom. The Lord is a personified form of eternal knowledge, and knowledge is light; how can the darkness of ignorance and delusions ever be dear to light?

For Bharat, the only relationship and one's welfare that matters in this world and life was total submission and devotion for Lord Ram—refer: (i) Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 178 in which he declares thus: “My welfare and good lies in the service of Lord Ram (Sita's beloved husband—‘Siya-Pati’]”; and in (ii) Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 178 he reasserts the above commitment by saying “let me go to the holy feet of Lord Ram; I see my welfare only in this and nowhere else”.

Earlier, in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, sage Narad has also felt hesitant in asking Lord Ram certain questions when the Lord assured him that he needn't feel this way as there is nothing in this world that is not possible for the Lord to give his devotees—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-5 that precede Doha no. 42. Lord Ram told Narad—“Look sage, you are well aware of my nature that I hide nothing from my faithful devotees, followers and subordinates. Say, there is nothing so dear to me that you cannot ask for it.”]

चौ०. करउँ कृपानिधि एक ढिठाई । मैं सेवक तुम्ह जन सुखदाई ॥ १ ॥

संतन्ह कै महिमा रघुराई । बहु बिधि बेद पुरानन्ह गाई ॥ २ ॥

श्रीमुख तुम्ह पुनि कीन्ह बड़ाई । तिन्ह पर प्रभुहि प्रीति अधिकाई ॥ ३ ॥

सुना चहउँ प्रभु तिन्ह कर लच्छन । कृपासिंधु गुन ग्यान बिचच्छन ॥ ४ ॥

caupāī.

kara'um̐ kṛpānidhi ēka dhiṭhā'ī. mair̐ sēvaka tumha jana sukhadā'ī. 1.
santanha kai mahimā raghurā'ī. bahu bidhi bēda purānanha gā'ī. 2.
śrī mukha tumha puni kīnhi baṛā'ī. tinha para prabhuhi prīti adhikā'ī. 3.
sunā caha'um̐ prabhu tinha kara lacchana. kṛpāsindhu guna gyāna
bicacchana. 4.

Bharat said—‘Oh an ocean of grace, kindness, mercy and compassion (i.e. Lord Ram)! I excuse myself for being bold and audacious enough to speak in front of you. I gather this courage and temerity because I am your humble follower, and you are the Lord who grants happiness and joy to all your subjects and the living beings in general (‘Jana Sukha-dai’).

[This is the reason why I have gathered enough courage to ask you something about which I surely have no doubt, but I wish that others who do not have this knowledge should benefit from my query. Since you are so gracious that you always ensure that all the creatures of your creation remain happy and contented, you will surely understand my idea and give me an answer that will benefit all the subjects of your creation in general—as you are their supreme Creator, and therefore it is their right to ask you, learn from you and seek guidance from you.]¹ (1)

Bharat said to Lord Ram, ‘Oh merciful Lord! The numerous great and eclectic virtues and divine qualities of ‘Sants’—i.e. saints and saintly people, those persons who are virtuous, noble, pious and holy, those whose hearts and mind are pure, those who have risen above the grossness of this mudane world and realized the truth of existence, those who have good virtues as their dominant character, those who are the torch-bearers of the principles laid down in the scriptures, those whose lives are exemplary and worthy of emulation—have been described, enumerated and expounded in a variety of ways in the scriptures such as the Vedas and the Purans².
(2)

Even you have often praised them, and their auspicious nature and honourable qualities with your own holy mouth³. You have great affection for them, are favourably inclined towards them, and are especially pleased with them. (3)

I want to hear about them. Oh kind Lord! You are an ocean of all good virtues and a treasure trove of right knowledge and wisdom. [In other words, you will be able to properly enumerate them for me, and what you say will bear a stamp of authority.]⁴
(4)

[Note—¹Bharat is himself a saintly person, so he hesitates in asking to know about something that he practices himself. It would naturally annoy an ordinary master, but our Lord Ram does not get angry because he is ‘an embodiment of the virtues of grace, kindness, mercy and compassion’—or ‘kṛpānidhi’.

The fact that Bharat is a saintly person is endorsed in Ram Charit Manas, Doha no. 205 along with Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede it where we read that the presiding deity of Triveni has praised Bharat and called him a ‘Sadhu’ or a saintly and pious person.

In Ram Charit Manas, we read in Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 30, and (ii) Doha no. 205 that the gods have showered flowers upon Bharat to show their great respect to him.

In Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Doha no. 207—to Doha no. 208, and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precede Doha no. 210 we read that sage Bharadwaj has praised Bharat lavishly, saying that Lord Ram loved him like no one else in this world.

So, this is the reason of Bharat's reluctance in asking Lord Ram about the virtues of saints and saintly persons. But at the same time Bharat gathered enough courage because he knew that Lord Ram never brought in to his heart any faults or demeanours of his followers and subordinates. On an earlier occasion at Chitrakoot, the same situation arose where he had to stand up and request the Lord to abandon his rigid stance of remaining in the forest and instead return to Ayodhya to be crowned its king-emperor. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 299.

Bharat knew for certain that Lord Ram never becomes angry at anyone, even against culprits and offenders—refer: In Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 260. In this verse Bharat has clearly declared this fact: “I (Bharat) know for certain the nature of the Lord (Ram), that he never gets angry even at offenders, culprits and sinners”.

Sage Vasistha was so impressed by the devotion and high level of spiritualism that Bharat had that he declared in open court at Chitrakoot “In my view, whatever is done keeping in mind the wishes of Bharat, such action or deed will always be auspicious and holy—I say verily that Lord Shiva is witness to the truth of what I am saying”. Refer—Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 258 along with Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede it.

Well now, if this is the case, how could Lord Ram not keep the wish of Bharat inspite of knowing that Bharat was very wise and there was no need to teach him on any metaphysical, spiritual, devotional, ethical, moral or any other subject of Dharma.

Lord Ram had great confidence in Bharat as is clear in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 264, and (ii) Doha no. 164 where the Lord expressly tells Bharat that he has great hesitation in even thinking twice about not keeping Bharat's wishes, i.e. he is eager to uphold all that Bharat says, especially when their Guru, sage Vasistha has himself endorsed Bharat's integrity and wisdom.

On his part, Bharat has acknowledged this fact that Lord Ram loves him so much that the latter is ready to go back on his vows and break his words if Bharat so wishes and tells him to do so—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 266.

²Lord Ram is addressed as ‘Raghu-raai’, meaning ‘a king of the Raghu dynasty’. The address of a ‘king’ implies that since you are a king, it is ordained upon you to teach the virtues of goodness to your all your subjects and citizens. That is why the words ‘Jana Sukha-dai’ have been used to address Lord Ram in Chaupai line no. 1 above. These two words literally mean ‘the Lord who gives happiness to his subjects’.

³The word ‘Sri-Mukha’ has two parts: ‘Sri’ meaning one who is honourable and revered, and ‘Mukha’ meaning the mouth. Hence, this word literally means the mouth of someone who is honourable and revered. The word spoken by such a person is said

to be holy and well-respected. Lord Ram is an incarnate Supreme Being, and hence whatever he says is indeed holy and well-respected.

The word ‘*Sri*’ is usually employed as a mark of great respect for those who are wise and respected. It is also a metaphor for wealth as it is one of the many names of goddess Laxmi, the patron deity of material prosperity and wealth. Anyone who teaches is deemed to be a treasury of knowledge, wisdom, erudition and sagacity—noble virtues which are equivalent to worldly treasures. Since Lord Ram is poised to elucidate about the grand virtues of saints, and since these words of wisdom are no less spiritually important than pearls and gems of priceless value, the Lord’s mouth from which such words would emerge is compared to ‘*Sri*’—a treasure trove of spiritual wealth!

When Lord Ram begins to teach the glorious virtues and divine characters of saints and those who are pious and spiritually evolved, it will be equivalent to opening of the door of spiritual treasury for everyone to grab by the fistful, ‘by the mindful’ so to say—because good advice and wisdom is accepted by the mind and not by the physical body, and this treasure is stored in the mind so that it can be retrieved whenever needed by one during the course of his life as a source for guidance and advice.

⁴The grand and magnificent virtues of ‘Sants’ (saints) have been expounded in detail at a number of places in the scriptures elsewhere also.

A brief list is as follows—

(a) *Adhyatma Ramayan* of sage Veda Vyas, Aranya Kand, canto 3, verse no. 37-39, describes the characteristics of a truly pious and holy person.

(b) Goswami Tulsidas’ *Ram Charit Manas*, in the following assorted places—
(i) Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-7 that precede Doha no. 2; (ii) Baal Kand, Doha no. 3 and Chaupai line nos. 5-12 that precede it; (iii) Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 7; (iv) Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 45, till Doha no. 46; (v) Uttar Kand, Chanda line nos. 13-16 that precedes Doha no. 14; (vi) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precede Doha no. 37, to Doha no. 38; (vii) Doha no. 46 and its preceding Chaupai line nos. 2-8 that precedes Doha no. 46.

(c) Goswami Tulsidas’ *Vairagya Sandipani*—verse no. 8-33.

(d) In the *Upanishads* also, there are numerous instances when the eclectic qualities and grand auspicious virtues of saintly, holy and pious people are enumerated. Some of the examples are the following—(i) Shatyani Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, verse no. 19, 25; (ii) Shandilya Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Cantos 1, Section 1-2; (iii) Sanyas Upanishad of Sam Veda, Canto 2, verse nos. 1, 55-57, 60; (iv) Jabal Darshan Upanishad of Sam Veda, Canto 1, verse nos. 4-6; Canto 2, verse no. 1; (v) Kaivalya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 2.]

संत असंत भेद बिलगाई । प्रनतपाल मोहि कहहु बुझाई ॥ ५ ॥

संतन्ह के लच्छन सुनु भ्राता । अगनित श्रुति पुरान बिख्याता ॥ ६ ॥

santa asanta bhēda bilagā’ī. pranatapāla mōhi kahahu bujhā’ī. 5.

santanha kē lacchana sunu bhrātā. aganita śruti purāna bikhyātā. 6.

Oh Lord who cares for those who have taken shelter with thee! Tell me the different virtues, attributes, qualities and nature of saints and non-saints in such a comprehensive way that a clear distinction can be made between the two of them (i.e. between the saints and non-saints), and I can properly understand them without any ambiguity.¹ (5)

[Then Lord Ram enumerated the grand positive virtues of saints so that not only is the query of Bharat satisfied but such knowledge can also help others to be enlightened about them. The Lord then goes on to describe the negative qualities of non-saints. This helps to bring into focus the difference between the two types of persons: the saints and the non-saints. The contrast between the characters of the two becomes very evident. It helps a person to determine with whom to have relations in life and whom to avoid; or whom to follow as an ideal and whom to neglect in life.]

The Lord said—‘Listen brother. The auspicious and divine virtues of saints are countless (i.e. it is not possible to list them all here, but still I’ll tell you the main ones), and they are famed in the scriptures such as the Vedas and the Purans². (6)

[Note—¹The word ‘bujhāī’ means to explain things in such a way that the listener fully understands them, and has no ambiguity about them.

²Bharat asked the Lord to tell him the virtues and characteristic qualities of saints and non-saints in a comprehensive manner. The Lord therefore stresses that it will take an independent tome to enumerate all the virtues and glorious characters of them if one were to list all of them and explain all of them exhaustively. So it will be better to outline only the salient features at present. Bharat must realise this therefore, and should not think that the salient features or important virtues that the Lord was about to narrate to him are all there is to it. There are countless more of them, but if one becomes aware of the important ones he can automatically get an idea of what the rest would be based on common sense. The auspicious virtues enumerated herein now act as the basis or foundation for the rest of the virtues which are not expressly mentioned here as they are more like off-shoots of the primary ones which are enumerated now.]

संत असंतन्हि कै असि करनी । जिमि कुठार चंदन आचरनी ॥ ७ ॥
काटइ परसु मलय सुनु भाई । निज गुन देइ सुगंध बसाई ॥ ८ ॥

santa asantanhi kai asi karanī. jimi kuṭhāra candana ācaranī. 7.
kāṭa'i parasu malaya sunu bhāī. nija guna dē'i sugandha basāī. 8.

The difference between a saint and a non-saint is like the relationship between an axe and sandalwood. The axe tries to cut and harm the sandalwood tree, but the latter is so kind and gracious that it lends its sweet fragrance to its cutter, the axe. (7-8)

[Note—The axe has the natural habit of cutting trees; to ‘cut’ is the axe’s job; it’s natural to it. It can’t act otherwise. On the other hand, the sandalwood has the natural habit of lending its sweet fragrance to anything that comes in contact with it—it’s its natural habit.

Both of them, the axe and the sandalwood, act according to their natural and inborn temperament and instincts. The merciless axe always harms the sandalwood

tree by cruelly cutting it into pieces, while the sandalwood is so forgiving, tolerant and graceful that instead of cursing the axe and vowing vengeance against it, it lends its sweet fragrance to the latter as a token of a welcome gift.

Likewise, true saints are always forgiving, tolerant, calm, understanding, merciful and gracious, spreading their goodness all around them like the sandalwood that spreads its fragrance wherever it is present. On the other hand, the non-saint is a cause of torments and miseries wherever he is, irrespective of whether or not he has anything to gain by harming or causing pain to others. This fundamental difference in attitude sums up the difference between a saint and a non-saint.]

दो०. ताते सुर सीसन्ह चढ़त जग बल्लभ श्रीखंड ।

अनल दाहि पीटत घनहिं परसु बदन यह दंड ॥ ३७ ॥

dōhā.

tātē sura sīsanha caṛhata jaga ballabha śrīkhaṇḍa.

anala dāhi pītata ghanahim parasu badana yaha daṇḍa. 37.

[Though the sandalwood does not curse the axe, but Mother Nature does not spare the axe from being punished. How? This is explained now.]

The sandalwood retains its fragrance and is used as an offering to the fire sacrifice and for other auspicious needs, but the face (cutting edge) of the axe is put in the fire and beaten by a heavy hammer to sharpen its edge. (Doha no. 37)

[Note—In spite of being deformed and dismembered, the cut pieces of the sandalwood tree are regarded fit and holy to be used in fire sacrifices. This is an exception—because normally anything that is cut and injured is deemed unholy and unfit for this purpose as it is regarded as polluted. Even when animal sacrifices were done in ancient times, a sacrificial animal was closely examined for any physical deformities, as only a healthy and perfect sample was deemed fit for offering as sacrifice during the rituals. These virtually ‘injured (cut) pieces’ of the sandalwood which should have been deemed unfit for offering to the sacrificial fire are instead used willingly. This is tantamount to Mother Nature praising it for its goodness and virtuous character of forgiveness and tolerance.

As opposed to the sandalwood, the axe is put in blazing fire and hammered hard to sharpen its edges each day after the daily grind of cutting trees. It is a metaphoric way of severely punishing it.

There is another interpretation of this example of the sandalwood and the axe. The sandalwood tree gives out more intense fragrance when it is cut. This is due to effusing of sweet fragrant sap when the tree and its branches are cut. The tree is located at a single place, but the pieces that are cut from it are taken to different places where they spread their fragrance. This is a metaphoric way of saying that saints are able to influence a large section of society in spite of their remaining at one place.

But the irony is that the axe, which comes directly in the contact of the sandalwood and is fortunate to get its fragrance and sap smeared on its surface, gets put in the fire and beaten mercilessly. It never benefits from this holy contact. Thus, non-saints are so unfortunate that even if they have the good fortune of being in direct touch of great saints, they are unable to benefit from this luck, and continue to suffer in this world and heaped with ignominy.

Tulsidas' another classical work known as the 'Dohawali' has verse that uses a metaphor to describe the difference between a saint and a non-saint by using the metaphor of the birds known as Chakor and Chakva as follows—

Goswami Tulsidas' Dohawali, Doha no. 194—

रघुबर कीरति सज्जननि सीतल खलनि सुताति ।
ज्यों चकोर चय चक्कवनि तुलसी चाँदनि राति ॥

raghubara kīrati sajjanani sītala khalani sutāti.
jyōm cakōra caya cakkavani tulasī cāṁḍani rāti..

“The full moon night is a provider of comfort, solace, peace and joy to the bird called Chakor (as described in Doha no. 193), while it is tormenting for the bird called Chakva¹.

Similarly, Tulsidas says that the glories, the fame and the divine stories of Lord Sri Ram provide peace, tranquility, happiness and joy to good people (gentlemen; those who are pure and gentle at heart, those who are pious, holy, noble and spiritually inclined), but the holy name of the Lord and his divine stories (or any talk about him and even the mention of him) creates torments, annoyance, irritation and heart-burn among miscreants and evil people. (194)”

The Chakva is the ruddy goose or an ostrich. The Chakor is the Indian red-legged partridge. The same light of the full moon appears to torment the Chakva while it pleases the Chakor. The Chakor feels happy at the sight of the moon, while the Chakva shuns it.

These two birds are used as metaphors to describe how the divine stories of Lord Ram—and for that matter any thing related to spiritualism—is liked by saintly and noble people, but abhorred by non-saintly and wicked people. It also emphasizes how the same story is interpreted differently by these people.

Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 16 says—“Lord Sri Ram manifested in this world like the full moon coming up in the eastern horizon to give happiness to saintly people and act like the frost or snow for the lotus flower symbolizing those who are wicked and evil.” The same lotus blooms when it sees the full moon in an ordinary night, but it shrivels and dies when the same moon rises in a night that is biting cold, when there is frost and it begins to snow.

In the present context it means that the same story of Lord Ram gives immense pleasure and spiritual comfort to those who are noble and saintly, while tormenting and annoying those who are evil and wicked.

Evil, sinful, pervert and wicked people have a natural tendency to see the wrong side of everything. They are compared to the bird Chakva which is angry when the full moon rises on the horizon because it torments this bird. While this moon is welcomed by the rest of the creatures, this is the only bird which abhors it, hates it, and treats the full moon with utter disdain and contempt.

Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 64 says “cool (good, pleasant) advice that should have been soothing and comforting (for Sita) appeared to torment her like the fire of hell just as the case of the Chakva which feels extremely unhappy and agitated during the night of the full moon of the Sharad Purnima (though this moon provides comfort, peace, solace and happiness to the rest of the world)”.

In Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 1, Lord Shiva tells his divine consort Uma that—“Lord Ram’s divine glories and eclectic qualities are extremely sublime, and are very mysterious and enigmatic—i.e. they are not easily understandable by all. While saints and wise people who hear them and do understand them develop spiritual wisdom and the virtue of renunciation, those who are of low and corrupt intellect, those who are opposed to the Lord and have no spiritual inclination or desire to follow the righteous path of Dharma (proper thought and noble intentions in life) prick holes in it and twist the story to suit their vested interests. They therefore get sucked in the endless vortex of delusions and confusions, while the saintly people find liberation and deliverance from the same story.”

For instance, saintly persons find in the story the nectar-like message of the importance of having devotion and submission for the Lord as an easy means of attaining spiritual emancipation and salvation; they analyse the different aspects of the story and pick up gems of spiritual wisdom and countless advices for leading a life that is auspicious, righteous, noble and holy; they read the story and hear it being told as a tool for obtaining peace, solace, succour and comfort for their mind and heart.

The wicked people and those with pervert mind find countless faults in it and point out so many taints in the character of Lord Ram. They treat it as some fictional writing which is meant to entertain.]

चौ०. बिषय अलंपट सील गुनाकर । पर दुख दुख सुख सुख देखे पर ॥ १ ॥

सम अभूतरिपु बिमद बिरागी । लोभामरष हरष भय त्यागी ॥ २ ॥

caupāṭi.

biṣaya alampaṭa sīla gunākara. para dukha dukha sukha sukha dēkhē para. 1. sama abhūtaripu bimada birāgī. lōbhāmarāṣa harāṣa bhaya tyāgī. 2.

Saints and pious people do not get indulgent, engrossed and entangled in the material objects of the senses in the world and their temptations of pleasure and comfort. They are a treasury of politeness and good virtues. They feel sorrowful and miserable at the sorrows and miseries of others, and delighted at seeing others happy¹. (1)

They maintain poise and equilibrium of mind and thoughts so much so that they have practice exemplary level of equanimity, neutrality, dispassion, a sense of evenness and detachment along with the grand virtues of forbearance and tolerance. They treat all the creatures and things equally, with stoic indifference. They do not treat anyone as a friend nor someone else as an enemy. [Since they treat everyone alike, naturally such a person has no enemy, as all are his friend.]

They are free from the negative quality of Mada (ego, pride, arrogance, haughtiness, hypocrisy and vanity). They, on the other hand, have an abundance of the positive virtue of Vairagya (renunciation). They abandon Lobha (greed, rapacity), Krodha (anger, wrathfulness), Harsha (feeling of joy from worldly gains) and Bhaya (fear from anything related to this mundane gross existence)². (2)

[Note—¹The word ‘biṣaya’ refers to the charms and temptations of the objects of the senses in the material world. This concept is closely related to another spiritual fault—known as ‘Vasana’ which refers to the desire of the sense organs for self gratification and yearning to derive pleasure and comfort from their respective objects

in the external world. Thus, not to be entangled in these things is one of the main signs of saints.

Does it mean that one should run away from the world, when it is said in the scriptures that this world is governed by the law of Karma—i.e. as long as one lives in this world he must do something to survive as well as to chalk out a path for his future. The trick is to continue doing deeds and maintain one's stable position in the world that has come to a person's share, but to remain neutral and dispassionate towards everything in this mundane and mortal world, not to get emotionally and sentimentally involved in or attached with anything, to do everything to the best of one's ability without worrying for the result and then offering both the deed as well as its consequences as an offering to the Lord God, and so on and so forth. If one is able to successfully lead a life in this exalted way then it is as good as actually and physically renouncing it and becoming a hermit. There is no need to make the body suffer by the hardships of the forest if one can remain in the household in the physical terms but remain detached from all temptations of the world and the sense organs internally at the mental and emotional plane.

To have sympathy and empathy are another two virtues a saint possesses. Since he is merciful, compassionate and loving, since he sees his Lord in each living being, since he is enlightened and realised enough to see the same Atma (soul) in all the creatures, these virtues come to him naturally. This fact is endorsed in the next line.

²Obviously, when a person practices exemplary equanimity, neutrality and detachment on the one hand, and treats everyone, everything and every situation alike, there is no occasion for such negative traits as listed in this verse to ever find a foothold in his mind, sub-conscious and heart.

When a man has no 'Mada' he will be humble, polite, simple, readily approachable and affable. Since he treats everyone alike, he has no enemy or friend. Since he has no enemy, he has no 'Bhaya'. Since he practices 'Vairagya' (i.e. has renounced everything and all sorts of attachments and infatuations), he has no 'Lobha'. Since he has no 'Lobha', he is eternally contented. All these go together to make him free from 'Krodha' and 'Haraha' because the former (Krodha) arises when a person's desires are not fulfilled or when his ego is hurt, and the latter (Harsh) arises in the opposite situation. Practice of equanimity takes care of them both.]

कोमलचित दीनन्ह पर दाया । मन बच क्रम मम भगति अमाया ॥ ३ ॥

सबहि मानप्रद आपु अमानी । भरत प्रान सम मम ते प्रानी ॥ ४ ॥

kōmalacita dīnanha para dāyā. mana baca krama mama bhagati amāyā. 3.
sabahi mānaprada āpu amānī. bharata prāna sama mama tē prānī. 4.

Their mind and sub-conscious as well as their nature are extremely supple, mild, tender, affable and calm. They have mercy, sympathy, empathy and compassion for the lowly and the humble, for those who suffer and are miserable.

They have the purest form of Bhakti (devotion, dedication, submission) for me, and their mind and heart, their words and their deeds are all dedicated in this direction. They are free from the influences of Maya (delusions pertaining to this world and its temptations that are entangling for the soul)¹. (3)

They honour everyone else and show respect to them, but do not like being honoured and shown undue importance for themselves. Oh Bharat, they are extremely dear to me as if they are my life. (4)

[Note—¹Those who feel the pain of others, and empathize with other creatures and their sufferings, naturally have a compassionate, merciful and tender mind. It is a character of saints—refer also Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 2 where it is said that sage Narad was filled with pity and mercy for Jayant when he saw his miserable condition. The incident is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 1, till Doha no. 2. It so happened that Jayant, the son of Indra, ran from one god to another god seeking protection against an arrow shot at him by Lord Ram for a grave mischief he had committed. Jayant had bitten Sita and made her bleed. No one gave him any protection against the wrath of the Supreme Lord, but when sage Narad saw his pitiful condition he felt mercy for him. This is because Narad was a ‘saint’. He advised Jayant to go and ask Lord Ram for forgiveness, which is the only method for his safety now.

The concept of ‘Bhakti’ (devotion, dedication, submission and love for the Lord God) has been elaborately described in Ram Charit Manas at countless places. Some of them are the following—

- (i) Ayodhya Kand: 2/93/6; 2/131/5-6; 2/137/1; 2/204; 2/219/4-5; 2/265/3; 2/291/1-3; 2/299/203; 2/301/3.
- (ii) Aranya Kand: 3/16/2-9; 3/35/7—3/36/7.
- (iii) Kishkindha Kand: 4/12/1-2; 4/15/10.
- (iv) Sundar Kand: 5/46/1-4, 6—5/46; 5/48/1-7—5/48.
- (v) Uttar Kand: 7/14/5-16; 7/46/3; 7/86/1—7/87 Ka; 7/115/11-16; 7/116/1-8—7/120; 7/122/15-19.

In Tulsidas’ collection of verses known as Dohawali, a number of verses are dedicated to the theme of Bhakti—for instance, refer to verse nos. 53-54, 87-88, 126-127, 134-140, 145, 147.

The renowned version of Veda Vyas’ Ramayan, known as ‘Adhyatma Ramayan’, describes Bhakti in its Aranya Kand, Canto 3, verse nos. 37-39, and in Uttar Kand, Canto 7, verse nos. 60-72.

The Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 8, paragraph nos. 12-14 describes Bhakti in a metaphysical perspective.]

बिगत काम मम नाम परायन । सांति बिरति बिनती मुदितायन ॥ ५ ॥
सीतलता सरलता मयत्री । द्विज पद प्रीति धर्म जनयत्री ॥ ६ ॥

bigata kāma mama nāma parāyana. sānti birati binatī muditāyana. 5.
sītalatā saralatā mayatrī. dvija pada prīti dharma janayatrī. 6.

They have no desires, wishes, yearnings, passions and lust whatsoever, and therefore no need to fulfill them. They are devoted to my (Lord Ram’s) holy name.

[That is, they remember the Lord at all times in their lives, and silently repeat is divine name constantly. It helps them to ward off evil thoughts from entering their minds. They have eliminated all worldly desires and wants, because only when this is

brought into practice can one turn himself to the thoughts of the Lord God. The mind and the heart can't do these two things simultaneously; it's either the world or the Lord.]

They are an abode of the eclectic virtues of Shanti (peace, tranquility, serenity), Virati (Vairagya—i.e. renunciation, detachment and dispassion), Binati (humility and simplicity), Mudit (cheerfulness, happiness and blissfulness under all circumstances), Sital (calm, self-controlled), and Saral (simple, without pretensions and deceit), Mayatri (friendly).

[Turning away from the world and its temptations automatically makes the mind calm and tranquil. The perceptions of the world have a buffeting affect on the mind and the sub-conscious, and as long as the creature continues to remain indulgent in the world of material sense objects, the mind is constantly pulled in that direction. Then there is the associate problem of the constant nagging of the sense organs of the gross body which is directly related to the equally gross world; they are coparceners in the joint family setup. The Atma of the creature, i.e. the creature's 'true self', is an independent entity, and as long as this Atma allows its self to be under bondage of either of them—the body consisting of the sense organs, and the world of material objects—the creature cannot ever hope to find peace, bliss and happiness. As long as the Atma remains attached to the body and the world, it is affected by their grossness; and when it frees its self from both of them, i.e. when it gains 'Virati', it regains its primary form which is ethereal, subtle and sublime, a form that is characterized by the grand and eclectic virtues of Binati, Mudit, Sital and Saral.]

They have affection for the feet of Brahmins¹—i.e. they respect those who are elderly, learned and wise in the society.

They are the ones who support, enhance, protect, propagate, and in general act as the crucible that fosters and encourages the grand and glorious virtues of Dharma (righteous and auspicious laws of Nature and God; the tenets of propriety, probity, ethics, morality and nobility in thoughts and conduct). (5-6)

[Note—¹This word *Brahmin* is too often misunderstood and misinterpreted to mean a particular member of the society who is supposed to be given respect, no matter what his moral and educational standard is. The real intention is not that even a corrupt, unwise, morally depraved and foolish person should be honoured just because he is born a 'Brahmin'. The intention of the scriptures is never this. In ancient times this was the class of people who were designated to study the scriptures and act as moral and practical guide to the rest of the society. This was envisioned by our ancestors to help regulate the functioning of the society in an orderly manner by dividing the entire working into four clear segments and delineating each segment with a list of duties its members were supposed to do. This prevented clash and duplicity of work, as each of the four classes knew what it is supposed to do. This in effect created a hierarchy in the society, with the learned ones who were known as the 'Brahmins' occupying the upper rung just like a patriarch of a large extended family who oversees the working and welfare of the entire family. A patriarch is an old man, and has the backing of years of experience behind him. Obviously he is the most competent man to give sane and rationale advice to the younger generation. This exactly was the role of the Brahmin.

Even in the modern world, a child is taught to give respect to his elders; its part of his moral education. Hence, 'paying respects to Brahmins' should be understood in the correct perspective.

The salient features of Brahmins are the following—they should possess these noble qualities—(1) ‘Riju’-be expert in the Rig and the Yajur Vedas, (2) ‘Tapa’-should be involved in doing penances, observing austerities and enduring sufferings for the welfare of the soul and the society, (3) ‘Santosh’-be contented and satisfied, (4) ‘Kshamaa’-to be forgiving and tolerant, (5) ‘Sheel’-to have such virtues as good character, dignity, decorum and virtuousness, (6) ‘Jitendriya’-to have self control over the sense organs, (7) ‘Data’-to be a giver, one who sacrifices his own interests for the benefit of others, (8) ‘Gyani’-one who is well learned, wise, enlightened and erudite, (9) ‘Dayaalu’-to be merciful and compassionate. [Shatpath Brahman.]

An entire Upanishad called Vajra-shuchiko-panishad, belonging to the Sam Veda tradition is devoted to the subject. The eclectic virtues of Brahmins have been expounded in Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 3, Brahman 5 as well as in Canto 3, Brahman 8, verse no. 10.

The Param Hans Parivrajak Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, paragraph no. 7 describes in a holistic way the virtues of a true Brahm as the one who is highly wise, self-realised, erudite and enlightened about the Atma and the principles governing the true meaning of Brahm and such religious signs as doing fire sacrifices, wearing the sacred thread and the tuft of hair on the head, observing sacraments etc.

To quote this Upanishad—‘A true Brahmin is a wise and enlightened person who treats the Atma, the pure consciousness, as the non-dual Principal of creation (i.e. who regards the Atma as a personification of the supreme Brahm that is non-dual or Advaita and the only supreme Authority of creation), and for whom being steady in his meditation and contemplation as well as spiritual pursuit is the symbolic tuft of hair—such a person is deemed to be cleansed and made holy by whatever he does. This is because all his deeds are deemed to be auspicious and holy. {To wit, he need not do special deeds such as fire sacrifices or observing of sacraments in order to wash off his sins or any kind of spiritual taints that might be adhering to him.}

He is deemed to have completed doing all religious and auspicious deeds required to be done by a man.

It must be understood that such an enlightened man is indeed a Brahmin for he is dedicated and devoted to Brahm (the Supreme Being), he is no less than a God, he is indeed a ‘Rishi’ (or a great sage), he is a ‘Tapasvi’ (or someone who is well endowed with the glorious virtues of Tapa, i.e. austerity and penance, and is steadfast in observing its tenets), he is the best follower of the tenets of the scriptures and an excellent spiritual aspirant, he is therefore the Guru (guide, teacher and preceptor) for the whole world.

A truly wise, enlightened and self-realised aspirant who understands the implications and import of what has been said above realises the truth of the statement that the pure conscious Atma standing for Brahm is the true identity of his. And therefore such an enlightened man declares ‘It (Brahm; Atma; Truth; Consciousness) is me’.

The Pashupat Brahm Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse no. 19 describes who a true Brahmin is as follows—“A true Brahmin is one who wears the Yagya Sutra (the sacred thread worn during the performance of fire sacrifices, especially the symbolic one as narrated in verse no. 16), who employs the Pranav Mantra (i.e. the OM Mantra) for his religious needs (such as when doing Japa or repetition, Yoga or meditation, Dhyan or contemplation, etc.), and who is well-versed in the principles of Brahm Yagya (spiritual practices which are equivalent to a formal fire sacrifice but done in a subtle and symbolic manner which lead directly to

the realisation of the supreme cosmic Consciousness and the absolute Truth known as Brahm).

The Gods (the term is a metaphor for the virtues of auspiciousness, righteousness, holiness, divinity, nobility etc.) are to be found in the diligent observance of the principles that define a man as a Brahmin. {To wit, if a man is a true Brahmin as outlined above, he is deemed to be living God in the sense that he would possess all the eclectic virtues that collectively defined as being ‘godly’}.

The Hans (the enlightened Atma, the self-realised and Brahm-realised person) who adheres to the principles of Sutra (i.e. who follows the tenets that lead to Brahm-realisation, who offers his obeisance to the Supreme Being in the manner outlined in this Upanishad, who leads a life like a true Brahmin as described above) is deemed to be doing the Yagya (the fire sacrifice).

There is no difference between the Hans and Pranav. That is, there is no difference between the immaculate Atma, the pure conscious ‘self’ known as the Hans, and the supreme transcendental Brahm known as Pranav. {Brahm is the cosmic Consciousness that produces vibrations of life in the ether that are heard in the form of Naad. These dynamic vibrations in the cosmic ether produce sound that is encapsulated in the monosyllabic word OM. Hence, the OM is a sound form or the cosmic Naad known as Pranav which stands for Brahm because it is the latter which has generated this sound. If the Atma is personified as a divine Swan known as Hans, the supreme cosmic Atma known as Brahm is personified in the form of Pranav which is a cosmic sound called Pranav, and which is represented by the word OM. Refer verse no. 17 and 20 of this Canto 1 of the Pashupat Brahm Upanishad in this context.} (19).”

The Par Brahm Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse nos. 8-13 describe who *is* a true Brahmin, and verse no. 14 describes who *is not*. Now, let us examine what these verses say.

First let us see *who is not a true Brahmin*:--“Verse no. 14 = Those Brahmins who are engrossed merely in performing rituals and observing sacraments, or who are engaged in the mundane affairs of the world are Brahmins only for name’s sake (and not true Brahmins), because they live only to fill their stomachs and enjoy the fame, comforts and pleasures that come with worldly respect. Such people go to hell at the end of their lives.

{That is, they continue to take birth and die again, and during each life they undergo sufferings and miseries that are part and parcel of gross mundane existence. They do not find Mukti or spiritual liberation and deliverance, nor do they find peace and bliss that comes with self and Brahm realisation. They do not have true Gyan, and are only pretending to have it to fulfill their worldly desires. In short, they are not true Brahmins, they are imposters, and they do not do justice to the institution of Brahmhood. They give the holy stature of being a Brahmin a bad name.

The question arises, who then is a true Brahmin? The answer is self-evident in the foregoing as well as the following verses. That is, only those who have true knowledge of Brahm, and the depth of wisdom and enlightenment to understand what the term ‘Brahm’ is all about, who do not hanker after external purity and formalities but lay stress on inner cleansing and sincerity of purpose are true Brahmins. Such people would not be much bothered about sporting a tuft on the head or wearing the sacred thread to prove that they are Brahmins, but would instead strive to inculcate the glorious virtues that are so typical of those who have become self and Brahm realised, who have really understood the truth and reality of things.} (14).”]

ए सब लच्छन बसहिं जासु उर । जानेहु तात संत संतत फुर ॥ ७ ॥
सम दम नियम नीति नहिं डोलहिं । परुष बचन कबहुं नहिं बोलहिं ॥ ८ ॥

ē saba lacchana basahim jāsu ura. jānēhu tāta santa santata phura. 7.
sama dama niyama nīti nahim ḍōlahim. paruṣa bacana kabahūṁ nahim
bōlahim. 8.

All people who have these positive virtues firmly established in their hearts must surely be regarded as saints. (7)

They have, and practice, the auspicious virtues of Sham and Dam¹ (self control of the senses, and suppression of desires for self gratification as well as for the material world with its temptations, comforts and pleasures).

They never violate the laws of Dharma (probity, propriety, righteousness, ethics, morality, nobility and auspiciousness), and diligently follow them. They never say an angry word to others indicating haughtiness and insult. (8)

[Note—¹*Sham* is control of the Mana (the wayward mind and the heart), Buddhi (intellect), Chitta (sub-conscious mind and the subtler aspects of the mind and intellect), and Ahankar (sense of pride in the subtle as well as the grosser aspect of the body of the creature), and concentrating their efforts towards the Lord God represented by the Supreme Consciousness and the Absolute Truth of creation at the macro level of creation, and the Atma or the soul of the individual at the micro level.

Dam is its associated control of the various sense organs of the body—viz. the five organs of perception (eyes, ears, tongue, nose and skin) and the five organs of action (hand, leg, mouth, excretory and genitals).

It is therefore obvious that ‘Dam’ is control of the grosser aspects of the body of the creature, while ‘Sham’ is the control of his subtle body.

The *Niyam* means regularity and diligence in observance of certain laws and rules that help the spiritual aspirant reach his goal. There are said to be ten Niyams. They have been explained in Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, as a note appended to Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 80 which describes the “Chariot of God or the Dharma Rath” as it was narrated by Lord Ram for the benefit of Vibhishan.]

दो०. निंदा अस्तुति उभय सम ममता मम पद कंज ।
ते सज्जन मम प्रानप्रिय गुन मंदिर सुख पुंज ॥ ३८ ॥

dōhā.

nindā astuti ubhaya sama mamatā mama pada kaṇja.
tē sajjana mama prānapriya guna mandira sukha puṇja. 38.

They remain unruffled and calm even under the greatest of provocations; they treat praises and insults equally with stoic indifference. They have no attachment and affection for anything or anyone in this world, but for my holy feet. Verily I say that such pious gentlemen are very dear to me (Lord Ram) like one loves one’s own self,

and are deemed to be a temple of all that is good, virtuous and holy; they become a treasury of peace, happiness and bliss.' (Doha no. 38)

[Note—A true saint is one who treats all alike, and is completely detached from the world; he remains eternally calm and poised; he has no trace of ego and pride in him. He is humility and piety personified. Naturally therefore, he is neither offended when anyone speaks ill of him, nor elated at praises.

His only interest is the Lord; he has only one sort of affection—and that is in the holy feet of the Lord God, who in this case is Lord Ram, a personified form of the Supreme Being. The Lord says that such persons are extremely close and dear to him, and therefore they become a virtual temple of auspicious virtues and a fountainhead of happiness and bliss.]

चौ०. सुनहु असंतन्ह केर सुभाऊ । भूलेहुँ संगति करिअ न काऊ ॥ १ ॥

तिन्ह कर संग सदा दुखदाई । जिमि कपिलहि घालइ हरहाई ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

sunahu asantanha kēra subhā'ū. bhūlēhum' saṅgati kari'a na kā'ū. 1.
tinha kara saṅga sadā dukhadāī. jimi kapilahi ghāla'i harahāī. 2.

[Having outlined the sublime virtues of Saints, Lord Ram now lists the negative qualities of non-Saints so that the difference between them is clearly marked out. It also helps to understand the virtues of Saints more clearly as now a contrast can be made. If Saints are holy and pious people, the non-saints, on the other hand, are wicked, evil, pervert and sinful. The non-saints have characters that are just the opposite of those characters that are possessed by saintly people.]

Lord Ram told Bharat—'Now listen; I shall enumerate the outstanding negative qualities of non-saints ('A-Sant'). One should be wary of them and not establish any contact whatsoever with them even by mistake. (1)

Their company is invariably a cause of pain, torment, troubles, misery and grief for a person, just like a cow of low breed known as 'Har-haai (harahāī)' would negatively or adversely influence and corrupt another cow of high breed known as 'Kapilaa (kapila)', if both are kept together¹. (2)

[Note—¹The cow of low breed is known as 'Harhaai' as it has the bad habit of grazing on other's field and eating everything lying on the wayside, such as paper, wild or dry grass in a field that is dirty and unkempt, thrown away leftover food items that are stale, rotting and stinking, and in general keeping itself dirty and acting in an unholy manner. This term is usually applicable to a stray cow that goes begging for food from house to house; it will keep its self dirty, and its body is infested with germs, worms, fleas and maggots; it kicks even its care-taker and refuses to be milked; it sits at filthy places. The Harhaai breed of cow is fierce by nature, and it is prone to attacking people at the slightest provocation.

In contrast, the 'Kapilaa' cow is of a good and noble breed. It shuns all the negative traits of the Harhaai cow. If a cow of good breed, known as 'Kapilaa', is left to accompany the bad cow, known as the 'Harhaai', then over time the former would

naturally develop the same bad habits as the latter. Similarly, when someone keeps contact with an evil person, then in due course of time the former will gradually develop the bad habits of the latter.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, 2nd part of Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 46 in which Lord Ram tells sage Narad that saints take care never to step on a wrong path even by mistake.]

खलन्ह हृदयँ अति ताप बिसेषी । जरहिं सदा पर संपति देखी ॥ ३ ॥
जहँ कहँ निंदा सुनहिं पराई । हरषहिं मनहुँ परी निधि पाई ॥ ४ ॥

khalanha hr̥dayam̐ ati tāpa bisēṣī. jarahim̐ sadā para sampati dēkhī. 3.
jaham̐ kahum̐ nindā sunahim̐ parā'ī. haraṣahim̐ manahum̐ parī nidhi pā'ī. 4.

The wicked people have a constant heart-burn; they are ever jealous of those who are happy and cheerful, and become indignant and full of malice when they see the prosperity and well-being of others; they can't tolerate it!¹ (3)

Whenever they hear criticism of others, they feel so happy and derive immense pleasure as if they have unwittingly found some great treasure lying on the way. [They grab the opportunity to add some fresh spicy and malicious gossip to the already caustic things being said. They consider themselves fortunate at having had the opportunity to help add to the negative information about the person being criticized.]² (4)

[Note—¹This character is the opposite of the nature of saints who feel happy when others are happy, and sad when others are sad—refer: Ram Charit Manas, (i) Uttar Kand, 2nd part of Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 38, as well as (ii) Aranya Kand, 2nd part of Chaupai line no. 1 and line no. 2 that precede Doha no. 46 (where Lord Ram has preached sage Narad).

²This verse is an extension of verse no. 3 above. Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precede Doha no. 40. We shall read these verses shortly herein below.

Those people who harbour the negative trait of jealousy, malice and envy in their heart are bound to have heart-burn when they see others happy and prosperous. Naturally, when they hear others being criticized, they feel gleeful and elated. They feel cheerful and exhilarated as if they are given free of cost the valuable assets of others.]

काम क्रोध मद लोभ परायन । निर्दय कपटी कुटिल मलायन ॥ ५ ॥
बयरु अकारन सब काहू सों । जो कर हित अनहित ताहू सों ॥ ६ ॥

kāma krōdha mada lōbha parāyana. nirdaya kapaṭī kuṭila malāyana. 5.
bayaru akārana saba kāhū sōm. jō kara hita anahita tāhū sōm. 6.

They are ever engrossed in practicing Kaam (lust, passions, desires etc.), Krodha (anger, wrathfulness), Mada (arrogance, pride, hypocrisy and haughtiness) and Lobha (greed, rapacity and avarice)¹.

They are merciless, without compassion, are wicked, cruel, pervert, deceitful, impersonators, and sinful; they are a virtual treasure trove of such negative qualities. (5)

They are inimical to all, and harbour animosity and hatred for others even without any rhyme or reason. They are extremely ungrateful and thankless because they betray and cause harm even to those who are good to them and have been helpful to them². (6)

[Note—¹These four vices of Kaam, Krodha, Mada and Lobha are like siblings; they come and live together, and vanish also together. In Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 38 (1st line), Vibhishan has advised Ravana that “Kaam, Krodha, Mada and Lobha are the four paths that lead to hell (i.e. to sufferings and pain)”.

²Non-saints have a natural tendency of harming even those who do good to them. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 18 that precedes Doha no. 121 that reiterates this view when it says “Wicked people are inclined to harm others even if it serves them no good or is not in their interest just the rat that destroys everything in the house and the field though it has nothing to gain from causing this ruin”.]

झूठइ लेना झूठइ देना । झूठइ भोजन झूठ चबेना ॥ ७ ॥

बोलहिं मधुर बचन जिमि मोरा । खाइ महा अहि हृदय कठोरा ॥ ८ ॥

jhūṭha'i lēnā jhūṭha'i dēnā. jhūṭha'i bhōjana jhūṭha cabēnā. 7.

bōlahim madhura bacana jimi mōrā. khā'i mahā ahi hr̥daya kaṭhōrā. 8.

They are liars, impersonators, pretentious and deceitful. They tell a lie when something is to be given to others, and tell a lie when anything is to be taken from others. Similarly, they tell a lie to eat something, and tell a lie when something is to be given to others to eat.

[To wit, their whole world is based on lies and falsehoods. No reliance must be put in what they say, what they do, what they give, and how they behave. Their holy principle is ‘falsehood, deceit, conceit and lie’; this drives all their thinking and behaviour. They are boastful and pretentious—they boast that they have done this good and that charity, while the fact is just the opposite. They might say that they have had delicious food when invited to a royal banquet, whereas in fact they may have not been able to eat two square meals for the last couple of days.] (7)

They speak sweetly like the peacock, but their hearts are cruel, ferocious and full of venom.

[The peacock has a pleasant voice, but it is so toxic internally that it can devour and digest serpents which are themselves highly poisonous. Hence, one should

be careful and wary of them. Non-saints are smooth talkers and this helps them to lay their trap to deceive unaware people.] (8)

दो०. पर द्रोही पर दार रत पर धन पर अपबाद ।
ते नर पाँवर पापमय देह धरें मनुजाद ॥ ३९ ॥

dōhā.

para drōhī para dāra rata para dhana para apabāda.
tē nara pāmvara pāpamaya dēha dharēm manuajāda. 39.

They keep malice, hatred, ill-will and animosity with others, and keep a greedy eye over their women and their wealth. They not only enjoy hearing criticism of others, but themselves indulge in criticizing others (as if they are the only ones who are perfect and have no fault, while the rest of the world is full of faults and shortcomings; they enjoy pricking holes in the character of others while neglecting their own faults).

Verily indeed, such sinful, pervert, wicked, lowly and fallen men are demons in human form. (Doha no. 39)'

चौ०. लोभइ ओढ़न लोभइ डासन । सिस्नोदर पर जमपुर त्रास न ॥ १ ॥
काहू की जौं सुनहिं बड़ाई । स्वास लेहिं जनु जूड़ी आई ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

lōbha'i ōṛhana lōbha'i dāsana. sisnōdara para jamapura trāsa na. 1.
kāhū kī jaum sunahim barāī. svāsa lēhim janu jūrī āī. 2.

'Lobha (greed and rapacity) is their blanket and mattress. [To wit, their whole life is surrounded by greed and rapacity. They spend their entire life in attempts to satisfy their greed. Their waking hours as well as their sleeping hours, i.e. their entire life, is overcome with greed. Their mind is overwhelmed with greed; they think of nothing else but satisfying their greed at all costs. While they sleep they dream to acquire so many things of this world; when they are awake they spend their life pursuing the object of their greed. They are never satisfied and contented. The more they have the more they want. This results in a chain of desires that never allows them any peace and rest of mind and soul.]

Their behaviour and life is no different and better than that of an animal—because it is spent in eating and indulgence in sex. They have no fear of hell and its torments. (1)

If they happen to hear someone being praised, they sigh and take deep breath as if shivering and suffering from high fever¹. (2)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 39, and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 1, 3-6 that precede Doha no. 40 that express the same idea in different ways.]

जब काहू कै देखहिं बिपती । सुखी भए मानहुँ जग नृपती ॥ ३ ॥
स्वारथ रत परिवार बिरोधी । लंपट काम लोभ अति क्रोधी ॥ ४ ॥

jaba kāhū kai dēkhaḥim bipatī. sukhī bha'e mānahum' jaga nrpatī. 3.
svāratha rata parivāra birōdhī. lampāṭa kāma lōbha ati krōdhī. 4.

And on the other hand, if they see or find that others are in some unfortunate situation or facing difficulty or suffering in any way, they get ecstatic, feeling cheerful and exhilarated as if they have acquired the kingship of the whole world. (3)

They are extremely selfish and self-indulgent; they are even against and inimical to their own family members and their kith and kin. They become liars and pretenders, as well angry and wrathful because they are overcome with perversion, passion, lust, greed and yearning. (4)

मातु पिता गुर बिप्र न मानहिं । आपु गए अरु घालहिं आनहिं ॥ ५ ॥
करहिं मोह बस द्रोह परावा । संत संग हरि कथा न भावा ॥ ६ ॥

mātu pitā gura bipra na mānahim. āpu ga'e aru ghālahim ānahim. 5.
karahim mōha basa drōha parāvā. santa saṅga hari kathā na bhāvā. 6.

They do not respect and pay heed to anyone, even their own parents, their Guru (teacher and guide), and the Brahmins (elderly and wise men of society). They are despicable and ruined themselves, and have a propensity of ruining others and making them wicked too by their bad influence and corrupt company. (5)

Overcome with delusions and moral ignorance, they develop and harbour ill-will, malice, jealousy and animosity with all others.

They neither like the company of saints and holy people, nor do they like to hear the divine stories of the Lord God¹. (6)

[Note—¹The heart and mind of non-saints are so tainted and overshadowed with negativity that anything related to the Lord God is unacceptable to them. In this situation, how can any good virtues find a foothold in their inner-self?]

अवगुन सिंधु मंदमति कामी । बेद बिदूषक परधन स्वामी ॥ ७ ॥
बिप्र द्रोह पर द्रोह बिसेषा । दंभ कपट जियँ धरें सुबेसा ॥ ८ ॥

avaguna sindhu mandamati kāmī. bēda bidūṣaka paradhana svāmī. 7.
bipra drōha para drōha bisēṣā. dambha kapaṭa jiyam' dharēm subēṣā. 8.

They are like an ocean of bad qualities and evil tendencies. They have a pervert intellect and corrupt mind. They are full of passions, lust and yearning. They criticize the Vedas (scriptures) and ridicule them. And they claim ownership of wealth rightly belonging to others (i.e. they snatch things from others and claim that these assets belong to them). (7)

They keep animosity and ill-will with all, but have a tendency of treating Brahmins with greater contempt. Their heart is full of cunning, fraud, falsehood, deceit and conceit, but externally they wear attractive attire and exhibit a pleasant appearance (to mislead and cheat the world, for their exterior is quite the opposite of what is inside their mind and heart). (8)

दो०. ऐसे अधम मनुज खल कृतजुग त्रेताँ नाहिं ।

द्वारपर कछुक बृंद बहु होइहहिं कलिजुग माहिं ॥ ४० ॥

dōhā.

aisē adhama manuja khala kṛtajuga trētām̐ nāhiṁ.

dvāpara kachuka bṛnda bahu hō'ihahiṁ kalijuga māhiṁ. 40.

Such kind of despicable, wicked, sinful, pervert and lowly men are not found in Sata-Yug and Treta-Yug, are in a miniscule number in the Dwapar-Yug, but are abundant in countless hordes, and dime a dozen in the Kali-Yug. (Doha no. 40)

[Note—There are four eras or epochs according to Hindu belief. The first is called 'Sata-Yug', the second 'Treta-Yug', the third 'Dwapar-Yug', and the fourth is called 'Kali-Yug' which is the current era. These four eras complete one cycle of creation and destruction. It is believed that the first two eras were highly righteous and noble, while the last, the Kali-Yug, is highly corrupt and polluted morally. The Dwapar era had characteristics lying somewhere between the two extremes of being highly righteous and highly corrupt.

We shall read by-and-by in this Canto how corrupt and evil is the era of Kali-Yug is. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 97—to Chanda line no. 10 that precedes Doha no. 102.]

चौ०. पर हित सरिस धर्म नहिं भाई । पर पीड़ा सम नहिं अधमाई ॥ १ ॥

निर्णय सकल पुरान बेद कर । कहेउँ तात जानहिं कोबिद नर ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

para hita sarisa dharma nahiṁ bhā'ī. para pīṛā sama nahiṁ adhamā'ī. 1.

nirnaya sakala purāna bēda kara. kahē'um̐ tāta jānahiṁ kōbida nara. 2.

Oh brother (Bharat)! To be good to others and helpful to them, to do things for the welfare and well-being of others—there is no other better deed than this which can be classified as 'Dharma'. [This is the character of a saint.]

On the other hand, to cause pain and torment to others, to be the cause of other's miseries and grief—there is nothing more contemptible, condemnable, sinful and unholy than this. [This is the character of a non-saint.] (1)

Dear, I have told you the final conclusion that is drawn by all the Purans and the Vedas. It is well known by the experts on this subject¹. (2)

[Note—¹Just like a judge in a court knows the laws back and forth, and makes a judicious ruling considering all the facts of the case, what Lord Ram has taught Bharat is the conclusion of the scriptures. The Lord says this to stress upon Bharat that what he is teaching him in connection with saints and non-saints is endorsed by the scriptures as well as by those who have expertly interpreted them.]

नर सरीर धरि जे पर पीरा । करहिं ते सहहिं महा भव भीरा ॥ ३ ॥

करहिं मोह बस नर अघ नाना । स्वारथ रत परलोक नसाना ॥ ४ ॥

nara sarīra dhari jē para pīrā. karahim tē sahaḥim mahā bhava bhīrā. 3.
karahim mōha basa nara agha nānā. svāratha rata paralōka nasānā. 4.

Those who have a human body and cause or inflict pain, misery, grief and torment upon others, such people are invariably subjected themselves to great horrors and misery associated with this world which consists of an endless cycle of birth and death.

[To wit, those people who cause pain and misery to their fellow humans are never happy in life. They who cause sufferance to others suffer themselves too. It is a simple equation of action and its equal reaction. Such wicked people do not find peace and happiness themselves though they enjoy seeing others suffering; this attitude to make others suffer is a true sign of a wicked and pervert mind. Such sinful people never find liberation and deliverance for their souls from the horrors of birth and death and their associated torments in this world.] (3)

People commit so many countless sins and misdeeds out of Moha (attachment to the material world and the gross body that arises out of ignorance and delusions). They have so overwhelmed by these negative qualities (arising out of overbearing ignorance and delusions that create desires and passions in them) that they remain indulgent in pursuing selfishness, and in the process they ruin their future prospective of spiritual welfare. (4)

कालरूप तिन्ह कहँ मैं भ्राता । सुभ अरु असुभ कर्म फल दाता ॥ ५ ॥

अस बिचारि जे परम सयाने । भजहिं मोहि संसृत दुख जाने ॥ ६ ॥

kālarūpa tinha kaham̐ mair̐ bhrātā. subha aru asubha karma phala dātā. 5.
asa bicāri jē parama sayānē. bhajahim̐ mōhi sansṛta dukha jānē. 6.

Oh Brother! I (the Supreme Being; the supreme regulator and judge of creation who decides a person's destiny depending upon the deeds that he performs in his life) am like 'Kaal'¹ for them. I give them good or bad fruits (rewards; results) according to their individual deeds.

[To wit, if a person is saintly and pious, I reward him with all the benefits that come with following the path of righteousness, nobility and propriety, known as the path of 'Dharma'. On the other hand, if he is sinful, wicked and pervert in heart and mind then let it be known that I will not spare him from punishment, and he has to suffer the consequences of his own actions. I am a neutral judge.]¹ (5)

Considering all the pros and cons of what has been said (by me), those who are highly wise, erudite, sagacious and clever inculcate devotion and dedication in me in order to find freedom from the endless cycle of birth and death because they realise that this cycle is full of pain, miseries and torments². (6)

[Note—¹The word *Kaal* has many meanings, such as death and sufferance. It also means the factor of time. In other words, if a man does not improve himself in spite of all the good advice available to him, if he continues his perverse manners, then over time he has to suffer the consequences of his own deeds. His sufferings are his own making, and he should not blame others for it. The Supreme Being has to regulate such a huge world, and therefore he has to be neutral in his judgement as well as vigilant. Otherwise the whole kingdom of the Lord would become lawless and crumble like a kingdom whose king is careless in taking interest in the well-being of his subjects.

The Lord is not callous and cruel; he is merciful. But at the same time he has to ensure that the righteous and the holy people are not subjected to grief because of the activities of the non-saints. Then again, the Lord has to see that if the unrighteous and sinful are not punished, this will send a wrong signal to the good and the righteous. They will lose faith and confidence in the Lord. So after a certain point of tolerance and forgiving, the Lord has to be ruthless and stern in punishing the sinful and the guilty.

When Lord Ram says that he is like a 'Kaal for the wicked person' he means that he will have no mercy for such a person and will not forgive him. A wicked person will be severely punished, and then he must not blame the Lord for being cruel towards him. The Lord has to regulate the world, and any leniency on his part would spread chaos in the society. The Lord has to be strict side by side of being merciful.

The 2nd half of this verse clearly shows that the Lord is a neutral judge for all the creatures—they are rewarded or punished according to their own deeds and actions. There is very interesting spin-off to this premise. A person is rewarded or punished only when he owns up his deeds. If a man claims rewards for good deeds done by him, he cannot run away from the punishment that comes with evil deeds. There cannot be two yardsticks for judging any individual. But the situation completely changes when one offers all the deeds and their results to the Lord God himself—as is done in Bhakti (devotion and complete submission for the Lord). Naturally, the person who practices Bhakti cannot claim any right to the reward for anything good done by him for the simple reason that he has already offered the deed to the Lord God. If this is true for the reward of the good deed, it is also true for the punishment for bad deed.

In other words, a person who has Bhakti in him, who has completely surrendered himself to the Lord God by offering whatever he has to the Lord, i.e. who

is a saint by nature because a man who practices Bhakti is a saint by in all his characters, if free from the fear of punishment (as he cannot be accused of misdeeds). Otherwise also, a person who is a saint, i.e. who possesses the magnificent virtues outlined by Lord Ram in these verses, will naturally not do anything that goes against the principles of Dharma, and hence never has to fear the wrath of the Lord.

It is the non-saints who are to fear the Lord, and it is for them that the Lord becomes a Kaal!

²Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 78 Ka also reiterates this idea that “those people, whether they are wise or stupid, who expect to attain emancipation and salvation without having devotion and dedication for Lord Ram are akin to an animal who has no tail—i.e. they are oddities, they are anomalies, and they have a deformed mind that thinks irrationally”.

In Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, the 2nd line of Sortha no. 89 Ka says that “the Vedas and the Purans have sung (stressed; expounded; asserted; affirmed and declared) that no one can ever find peace, comfort and happiness without worshipping Lord Hari (Vishnu; the Supreme Being) and having devotion and dedication for the Lord”.

Therefore it is wise to get rid of futile debates and discussions that create nothing but confusions and vexations for the spirit, and instead one should commit oneself to worshipping, having devotion and dedication for Lord Ram, the brave Lord of the Raghu dynasty, who shows mercy, compassion and grace (towards his devotees), who is beautiful (i.e. is divine and holy, has noble virtues and auspicious qualities in him), and is the one who bestows all sorts of comfort and happiness (temporal as well as spiritual)—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Sortha no. 90 Kha.

In Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, the 2nd line of Sortha no. 6 Kha it is emphasized that “those who abandon all expectations and hopes from all others in this world, and instead become completely devoted to Lord Ram, worshipping him and having total dedication towards him (implying that they are completely dependent upon Lord Ram for all their needs, temporal and spiritual, for their welfare and well-being), are the ones who are indeed eligible to be classified as being very wise, erudite, sagacious and clever amongst all men”.

See also Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 41 herein below.]

त्यागहिं कर्म सुभासुभ दायक । भजहिं मोहि सुर नर मुनि नायक ॥ ७ ॥
संत असंतनह के गुन भाषे । ते न परहिं भव जिन्ह लखि राखे ॥ ८ ॥

tyāgahim karma subhāsubha dāyaka. bhajahim mōhi sura nara muni nāyaka.
7.

santa asantanha kē guna bhāṣē. tē na parahim bhava jinha lakhi rākhē. 8.

They (i.e. those who are wise and erudite) abandon getting involved in deeds, whether these deeds yield good and auspicious rewards or the opposite.

[‘Not getting involved in deeds’ does not mean running away from one’s responsibility in this world. It actually means doing deeds but remaining aloof from them and their results at the mental and emotional plane; doing deeds dispassionately with a detached sense as if these deeds are done as part of one’s duties in life ordained

by the Lord God; to do duties as a wish of the Lord and offering each one of these deeds and actions as well as their consequences to the Lord; to do deeds as a service to the Lord to please him and obey his instructions, and therefore staking no claim to its rewards or fear from its punishments; and so on and so forth.]

This is the way the Gods, wise men and sages who are leaders of others worship and adore me. [To wit, not getting mentally and emotionally involved in the deeds done by the physical gross body, to do deeds dispassionately and with detached neutrality, to do it as a service of and for the Lord, and to obey his instructions, and to offer both the deed as well as its fruits to the Lord God—this is indeed the way of true devotion and worship of the Lord that is practiced by Gods, sages and wise men.] (7)

Those who have properly seen (examined and understood) the virtues and characters of saints and non-saints that I have narrated herein above, never fall in the trap of the cycle of birth and death that is so typical and characteristic of this mundane and mortal world¹. (8)

[Note—¹This line resonates with the idea that has been expressed in Chaupai line no. 6 herein above.]

दो०. सुनहु तात माया कृत गुन अरु दोष अनेक ।

गुन यह उभय न देखिअहिं देखिअ सो अबिबेक ॥ ४१ ॥

dōhā.

sunahu tāta māyā kṛta guna aru dōṣa anēka.

guna yaha ubhaya na dēkhi'ahim dēkhi'a sō abibēka. 41.

Oh dear, listen! Maya (delusions) has created numerous qualities, both the good and the bad¹.

It is better not to take any notice of them, for once one begins to see them he gets sucked in the vortex of confusions that will cause consternations and vexations for him, and this will be equivalent to his being overcome by 'A-vivek' or ignorance. (Doha no. 41)''

[Note—¹Since this creation is caused by Maya, it has its merits and demerits. This is the grosser and physical aspect of creation. But at a subtle level, the reality of existence is different; it is the 'pure and sublime consciousness' known as the Atma that forms the true essence of this living world. Whereas the external world has its merits and demerits, whereas its outwardly character has some things that are good and auspicious and others that are bad and inauspicious, its reality is uniformly auspicious and holy as it is 'pure consciousness known as the Atma'. But the unfortunate part is that one is able to see the external world more easily than the subtle aspect of the same world because it is hidden from view. So, if a man relies upon the visible part of the world and attempts to derive at the truth, he will be left swinging between the right and the wrong, the merit and the demerit, the righteous and the unrighteous, the auspicious and the ignoble, and so on—which will leave him flummoxed and bewildered. This is his 'A-vidya'—or lack of knowledge of the 'truth'.

The Upanishads have unequivocally said that it is the same Brahm (the Supreme Being; the cosmic Consciousness) who has manifested in the form of the world. This means that all the countless units of this creation or world are reflections or images of the same entity known as Brahm. Then obviously there should be no dichotomy and opposite characters in this world. The aspect of the physical world that one sees with his gross organs of sight, i.e. the eye, presents a view that is contradictory to the assertion of the Upanishads that there is universality and uniformity in creation—because the world that the eyes see is the world created by ‘Maya’. Maya itself is a synonym for delusions, and hence there is no wonder in such a delusory sight of the world. Therefore, if one treats the world as the reality then he is overcome with Maya, and hence by ‘Avidya’ because delusions and ignorance go hand in hand. It leads to confusions and vexations, perplexing the spiritual aspirant and leaves him wondering what the truth is. This in turn robs him of this mental calmness and peace.

Maya is said to be ‘Trigunmai’—i.e. it is believed that it has the three Gunas as its main components. These three Gunas are—Sata, Raja and Tama. ‘Sata’ is the most auspicious, virtuous and noblest quality in a man and raises him to a high moral and spiritual pedestal. It marks predominance of righteousness and the highest standards of spirituals and mental evolvment leading to high thoughts, noble actions and righteous behaviour. ‘Raja’ is the medium quality in a person, and it is marked by worldly passions, desires, yearnings and greed. It makes a man more worldly than spiritual. ‘Tama’ is the third and most lowly of the three qualities and is used as a synonym for darkness and evil. Obviously, ‘Tama’ means ignorance, delusions and all the forces or qualities that are evil, mean, lowly, miserly, wicked and base. They pull down a man from high pedestal and virtually dump him in the dust yard of creation to rust and decay.

These three qualities together, in various permutations and combinations, decide the innate nature of a man. The greater presence of ‘Sata’ makes a man nobler as compared to a high ratio of ‘Tama’ which makes him wicked, pervert and evil. Various proportions of these qualities will therefore produce innumerable varieties of creatures having different temperaments, thought processes, behaviours, demeanors and mental setup in this world.

The ‘Trigunmayi Maya’ is further classified into three sub-classes—viz. Sata Guni Maya, Raja Guni Maya, and Tama Guni Maya. This nomenclature depends upon the dominance of one or the other of the three Gunas in any given situation. Thus, when the Maya is dominated by the Sata Guna, it is called ‘Sata Guni Maya’; when it is dominated by the Raja Guna, it is called ‘Raja Guni Maya’; and when it is dominated by the Tama Guna, it is called ‘Tama Guni Maya’.

In Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 44, Lord Ram says that—

फिरत सदा माया कर प्रेरा । काल कर्म सुभाव गुन घेरा ॥

phirata sadā māyā kara prērā. kāla karma subhāva guna ghērā.

“A creature endlessly keeps on wandering aimlessly under the influence of Maya which keep him covered (from the Truth) in a veil represented by Kaal (time), Karma (deeds), Swabhaava (nature, temperament and habit), and Gunas (characters that are controlled by the three Gunas of Sata, Raja and Tama)”.]

चौ०. श्रीमुख बचन सुनत सब भाई । हरषे प्रेम न हृदयँ समाई ॥ १ ॥
करहिं बिनय अति बारहिं बारा । हनूमान हियँ हरष अपारा ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

śrīmukha bacana sunata saba bhāī. haraṣē prēma na hṛdayam̐ samāī. 1.
karahim̐ binaya ati bārahim̐ bārā. hanūmāna hiyam̐ haraṣa apārā. 2.

When the brothers heard the holy words of wisdom taught by Lord Ram using his own mouth (i.e. own words, and himself), all of them were so overwhelmed with happiness and joy that their hearts could not contain them and overflowed with them. (1)

Everyone repeatedly offered their prayers of thanks to Lord Ram. Hanuman was especially very thrilled upon hearing this discourse. [This is because Lord Ram had obliged him by answering the question of Bharat, and in the process elucidating upon the grand virtues of saints.] (2)

पुनि रघुपति निज मंदिर गए । एहि बिधि चरित करत नित नए ॥ ३ ॥
बार बार नारद मुनि आवहिं । चरित पुनीत राम के गावहिं ॥ ४ ॥

puni raghupati nija mandira ga'ē. ēhi bidhi carita karata nita na'ē. 3.
bāra bāra nārada muni āvahim̐. carita punīta rāma kē gāvahim̐. 4.

After this enlightening discourse, Lord Ram, the Lord of the illustrious line of kings descending from the ancient king Raghu of Ayodhya (raghupati), went back to his royal palace.

In this way, Lord Ram enacted many glorious deeds and set many new examples of an exemplary life every day. (3)

Meanwhile, sage Narad used to pay repeated visits to Lord Ram, and sang praises in honour of the Lord's holiness and divinity, as well as his exemplary life and the glorious deeds which the Lord did¹. (4)

[Note—¹It ought to be noted here that sage Narad was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu who had manifested himself in the form of Lord Ram. So therefore, Narad felt exceedingly glad to visit Lord Ram to pay his obeisance to this beloved Lord on a regular basis.]

नित नव चरित देखि मुनि जाहीं । ब्रह्मलोक सब कथा कहाहीं ॥ ५ ॥
सुनि बिरंचि अतिसय सुख मानहिं । पुनि पुनि तात करहु गुन गानहिं ॥ ६ ॥

nita nava carita dēkhi muni jāhīm̐. brahmalōka saba kathā kahāhīm̐. 5.
suni biran̄ci atisaya sukha mānahim̐. puni puni tāta karahu guna gānahim̐. 6.

The sage (Narad) would personally witness the deeds of Lord Ram and how the Lord would behaved and acted on a day-to-day basis, and then the sage went back to the heaven, i.e. the abode of Brahma, to narrate them for the benefit of Brahma (and other Gods). (5)

Listening to Narad's narrative describing Lord Ram's holiness and divinity, and the many glorious deeds the Lord did in this world, Brahma (and other Gods) would derive immense spiritual joy and happiness, so much so that Brahma would ask Narad to repeat his narrative and tell the stories associated with Lord Ram again and again. (6)

सनकादिक नारदहि सराहहिं । जद्यपि ब्रह्म निरत मुनि आहहिं ॥ ७ ॥
सुनि गुन गान समाधि बिसारी । सादर सुनहिं परम अधिकारी ॥ ८ ॥

sanakādika nāradahi sarāhahim. jadyapi brahma nirata muni āhahim. 7.
suni guna gāna samādhi bisārī. sādara sunahim parama adhikārī. 8.

Even sages Sankadi praised sage Narad and his good fortune (that he goes to visit Lord Ram regularly so that he has the opportunity to personally see and pay his obeisance to the Lord).

Though Sankadi sages were highly Brahm-realised and enlightened so much so that they were always in a meditative state focused on Brahm (the Supreme Being represented by cosmic Consciousness), yet when they heard sage Narad's narrative describing Lord Ram's holiness and divinity, as well as the Lord's glorious deeds that he did in this world, Sankadi sages were so immensely moved by it that they would forget about their enlightened state and meditation, and instead begin to listen to Narad's narrative with full reverence, thereby enjoying the spiritual bliss and beatitude that came by listening to stories associated with Lord Ram, realizing that they were very fortunate to do so, and also entitled to it as they had themselves paid a visit to Lord Ram to pray to the Lord and seek the blessing of having devotion for him¹. (7-8)

[Note—¹This incident is narrated in detail in: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 32—to Doha no. 35 herein above.]

दो०. जीवनमुक्त ब्रह्मपर चरित सुनहिं तजि ध्यान ।
जे हरि कथाँ न करहिं रति तिन्ह के हिय पाषान ॥ ४२ ॥

dōhā.

jīvanamukta brahmapara carita sunahim taji dhyāna.
jē hari kathām̐ na karahim rati tinha kē hiya pāṣāna. 42.

Verily indeed, even highly enlightened and Brahm-realised sages such as Sankadi, who are free from all worldly fetters and have found deliverance from all sorts of delusions that act as shackles for a creature even while they live in this gross mortal world like others, had set aside meditation and contemplation as they preferred to

listen to the glories of Lord Ram because it gave them immense spiritual joy, happiness, bliss and beatitude.

Say then, it is really very unfortunate if a person would not have, or take interest in the stories of Lord Hari (i.e. Lord Ram) inspite of knowing how the enlightened Sankadi sages preferred to listen to the stories associated with Lord's holiness, divinity and glories when compared to doing meditation and contemplation.

Hence, there is no insinuation, exaggeration or wrong if one would assert that the heart of such an unfortunate person is dumb, gross, lifeless and emotionless as a dead piece of stone! (Doha no. 42)

चौ०. एक बार रघुनाथ बोलाए । गुरु द्विज पुरबासी सब आए ॥ १ ॥

बैठे गुरु मुनि अरु द्विज सज्जन । बोले बचन भगत भव भंजन ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

ēka bāra raghunātha bōlā'ē. gura dvija purabāsī saba ā'ē. 1.

baiṭhē gura muni aru dvija sajjana. bōlē bacana bhagata bhava bhanjāna. 2.

Once, Lord Ram (raghunātha) summoned a general assembly, and invited his Guru (sage Vasistha), the Brahmins (learned and respected people of the kingdom) and other citizens (commoners as well as all other residents of the city of Ayodhya) to attend it¹. (1)

When the Guru as well as the assembled sages, the Brahmins and other gentlemen were properly seated, Lord Ram said words that literally destroy the fetters of devotees who are tied down to the mundane world of countless miseries, grief and horrors, a world that consists of the endless cycle of birth and death.

[To wit, the Lord preached them many good, noble and auspicious things pertaining to spiritualism, metaphysics, theology, devotion etc. that would pave the path for immortality of the listener and help him find liberation and deliverance for his soul from continuously remaining entangled in the web of birth and death in this gross world, and suffer from the horrifying consequences of this entanglement.]² (2)

[Note—¹Lord Ram was a King, and it is a moral responsibility of the King to ensure that his subjects live a righteous and noble way of life according to the established principles of Dharma as expounded and ordained in the scriptures. Besides this, Lord Ram was not merely a worldly King; he was the personified form of the Supreme Being. So from time to time he called all the people and taught them the essence of the scriptures so that not only do they live an auspicious life according to the laws of Dharma, but also find emancipation and salvation for themselves so that the Lord is able to fulfill his promise to the world that he will do everything possible to make sure that every willing creature gets a chance to find liberation and deliverance from the fetter in which he finds himself tied down to this world and its horrors.

Being a noble and great King, it was his moral and ethical duty to ensure that his subjects are properly educated in the finer nuances of Dharma as well as the subtle essence of the truth hidden in the massive tomes of the many scriptures that possibly no one can thoroughly study and understand in his lifetime.

We come to a very interesting conclusion here—only someone who knows his subject properly and completely is able to teach others. That means, Lord Ram had a

thorough knowledge of the principles taught by the ancient scriptures. There is no wonder in it—for he is a personified form of the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic, the all-pervading, the all-incorporating and the all-knowing form of the Supreme Being known as the Parmatma. Even Brahma who is the patriarch creator of this visible creation and the progenitor of the Vedas, the primary scriptures, was born atop a divine lotus that emerged from the navel of this Viraat Purush.

In Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, the 1st half of line 9 of the Chanda (a type of verse) that precedes Doha no. 111, Brahma himself declares that Lord Ram “is a treasure trove of Gyan (knowledge) and Guna (auspicious and noble virtues)”.

²This verse can be interpreted in a slightly different way—viz. “When the invited gentlemen such as the Guru, the sages, the Brahmins and the citizens were seated, the Lord, who frees his devotees from the (fear and the tribulations from which he suffers due to the) shackle of birth and death in this mortal mundane world, began to speak”.]

सुनहु सकल पुरजन मम बानी । कहउँ न कछु ममता उर आनी ॥ ३ ॥
नहिं अनीति नहिं कछु प्रभुताई । सुनहु करहु जो तुम्हहि सोहाई ॥ ४ ॥

sunahu sakala purajana mama bānī. kaha'um'na kachu mamatā ura ānī. 3.
nahim anīti nahim kachu prabhutāī. sunahu karahu jō tumhahi sōhāī. 4.

‘Listen all the citizens who have assembled here. I do not say anything because I have any personal interest in it, nor because I favour you over others.

[Addressing the assembly, Lord Ram said: “I wish to teach you for your own spiritual welfare and auspicious future. I do not have any selfish motives in speaking to you, such as making you obedient to me or obliged to me. I am the Supreme Lord and caretaker of the whole world, and therefore it is my moral responsibility to guide my subjects on the correct path that will lead them to happiness and peace. When I speak to you, I am speaking to the rest of the world at large through you. It’s my noble advice for human kind in general, and if you benefit from it then it is your good fortune, otherwise you are as unlucky as the rest of the world who has been denied itself this privilege of paying heed to the advice given by wise men ever since the dawn of life in this world. So, listen to me and then do what you think is fit and proper.”] (3)

I do not speak anything that is untrue, unholy, unrighteous and unworthy, nor do I speak to impose my authority upon anyone or to show-off my knowledge of metaphysical and spiritual knowledge. After hearing me do whatever you think suits you.

[To wit, I am not forcing anything upon you just because I am your king and you have to obey me out of fear of punishment. I am speaking for your own long term good and welfare.] (4)

सोइ सेवक प्रियतम मम सोई । मम अनुसासन मानै जोई ॥ ५ ॥
जौं अनीति कछु भाषौं भाई । तौ मोहि बरजहु भय बिसराई ॥ ६ ॥

sō'i sēvaka priyatama mama sō'ī. mama anusāsana mānai jō'ī. 5.
jauṁ anīti kachu bhāṣauṁ bhā'ī. tau mōhi barajahu bhaya bisarā'ī. 6.

That person who obeys me and follows my advice is truly my devotee, and very dear to me¹. (5)

Listen brothers (bhā'ī)²! If I speak anything that is unrighteous, wrong or unethical, do not fear from stopping me. [Don't hesitate to raise your objections out of fear of annoying me or fearing punishment. I will welcome your comments if I am wrong.] (6)

[Note—¹Lord Ram's approach is one of friendliness and informality. In order to put his audience at ease he has opened his speech by saying that I am not saying anything with ulterior motives or to impose my will upon anyone of you. Listen to me, think it over, and then follow it if you think it serves your purpose. In spite of this freedom it is obvious that those who would follow my teachings will be dear to me like a teacher always favours a student in a class of so many pupils who listens to him carefully, obeys his instructions, and in whom the teacher sees a bright future. The teacher feels that his efforts have been well spent in teaching an obedient student instead of a class of disobedient pupils who mock at him and gain nothing from him.

Though obviously teaching a bunch of inattentive and disobedient students is an exercise in futility, a good teacher is one who does his duty to all of them diligently so that his conscience is clear. It is the misfortune of these rowdy students who had wasted this golden opportunity in life. It is but natural for the teacher to like and bless a particular student amongst them who is loyal to his teacher and worthy of being taught.

This is what Lord Ram means when he makes this statement that those who follow him are very dear to him. It is a matter of common observance that any master or boss will always favour an employee or subordinate who follows his instructions diligently, is loyal and obedient as well as dedicated and devoted to him. Favouring one follower does not mean that the Lord hates others or wishes for their bad future, but it indicates that this favoured follower is the privileged one who will taste the fruit of spiritual bliss and happiness, who will become eligible for emancipation and salvation, for liberation and deliverance.

Lord Ram is not a dictator passing inviolable edicts or mandates, with the threat of punishment. If anyone is forced to follow such orders then he does not become committed to it; it is done under duress, under fear of punishment. It is not the intention of the Lord at all. But at the same time he emphasized that if anyone does follow his advice then such person becomes the object of his special attention as compared to the others. This was the proverbial carrot that the Lord dangled—who would not want to be in the good books of the Supreme Lord? Well at least, with this self-interest in mind, the people will walk on the righteous and noble path that would have its own good affect on their general well-being. So they benefit with two hands—one, they get Lord Ram's favour which will ensure that any inadvertent mistakes they may make in life will be forgiven liberally, and second, they ensure a bright and secure spiritual future.

²The word 'Bhai' (bhā'ī), meaning a brother, is remarkable here. All classes of citizens of all ages were present in this meeting. The Lord had used the universal form of address for all of them by calling them 'Bhai' or brother (refer: Chaupai line no. 6

that precedes Doha no. 43 above). Each individual had a different level of relationship with the Lord—some treated him as their Lord, some as friend, others as their de-facto parent, still others as their Guru, and so on. This is why the Lord used the equalizing term of ‘brother’ for them. In Lord Ram’s eyes, all of them were equal if they loved him, had devotion for him and were determined to follow the path shown by him; all such people are very dear to the Lord.

The fact that all the citizens treated Lord Ram as their parent, Guru and friend is declared by themselves in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 47. When we read this solemn declaration of the people together with what sage Valmiki says with regard to the places where Lord Ram should live in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 130, it becomes clear why the Lord loved all his citizens so dearly as to be worried about their welfare. In this Doha, sage Valmiki has clearly stated “those for whom you (Lord Ram) is a parent, a Guru and a friend, and everything else besides, oh Lord, you should reside inside their heart as if it was your own divine abode”.

The Lord is attempting to tell the assembly that he treats all of them as family members, and not as subjects of a king. So there is no cause of fear. Then again, being a king, he is like an elder brother in the family, and this is the reason why he is teaching them; it is his moral duty. Just like during a family get-together, the citizens must act and talk informally as this would bond them more strongly to each others and with the Lord as well. Just like the younger brothers are eager to carry out the instructions of a wise and old elder brother of the family who has spent his whole life rearing his younger brothers as if they were his sons, the citizens should treat Lord Ram with the same emotion and approach.

This word ‘Bhai’ has been repeated often during this sermon—refer: (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 44; (ii) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 45; (iii) Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 46.

The word ‘if’ used by Lord Ram implies that ‘I will not speak anything that is wrong, but in case I make an inadvertent error, you must feel free to object to me’.

All these things show that Lord Ram was an extremely polite, affectionate, affable and friendly ruler. He had no trace of arrogance or vanity around him. The subjects of the kingdom felt motivated to obey him out of their natural sense of loyalty and affection for such a gracious king.

The reason why Lord Ram said ‘if I say anything wrong or improper then feel free to stop me or object to what I say’ is that his learned Guru (moral preceptor and teacher who was the royal high priest) sage Vasistha as well as many learned and elderly Brahmins were sitting in the audience along with the citizens. The Lord is about to teach the assembly on spiritual and metaphysical subjects that should have been normally done by them, and this would apparently seem a transgression. This problem is compounded by the use of the word ‘Bhai’ (brother) which should not be used for a senior person such as one’s Guru and an elderly Brahmin. Hence, to overcome this objection, the Lord added a caveat giving them a free and fearless hand that ‘if he makes any mistakes, they are free to raise an objection and stop him right then’. This single clause removed any chance of unwarranted misunderstanding or any subtle hint of any sort of insult or insubordination that would otherwise may have been caused.

The Lord went to this great extent to honour the elders present in the assembly, for otherwise it would have sent a wrong signal that he had insulted his Guru and the Brahmins by preaching even to them, something that would have been improper—though of course Lord Ram was within his rights to preach or teach others

as he was a king-emperor and it was not only his right but even moral duty to show the citizens the right path and call a general meeting at regular intervals where policy matters are discussed. The teachings of Lord Ram to his subjects comes under this category as well—for he wanted to tell one and all that he wants everyone in his realm to observe the principles of Dharma, i.e. the principles of morality, propriety, probity, honesty, truthfulness, uprightness, auspiciousness and righteousness so that the kingdom becomes a model state.]

बड़ें भाग मानुष तनु पावा । सुर दुर्लभ सब ग्रंथन्हि गावा ॥ ७ ॥
साधन धाम मोच्छ कर द्वारा । पाइ न जेहिं परलोक सँवारा ॥ ८ ॥

baṛēṁ bhāga mānuṣa tanu pāvā. sura durlabha saba granthanhi gāvā. 7.
sādhana dhāma mōccha kara dvārā. pā'i na jēhiṁ paralōka saṁvārā. 8.

It is out of great luck and good fortune that a creature gets the body of a human being. It is rare even for the gods, and this fact is endorsed by all the scriptures¹. (7)

It (the human body) is a virtual blessing in disguise as it is regarded as an abode or a store-house of all means by which a Jiva (the living being) can do spiritual endeavours and neutralize the bad effects of any past misdeeds done by him in his previous lives, paving the way for his Moksha—emancipation and salvation of the soul. In other words, the human form is a doorway or a stepping stone for the Jiva's final Mukti—i.e. the final liberation and deliverance from the endless cycle of birth and death².

If a person does not ensure a good spiritual future and well-being for himself with this blessing of the human form, then obviously he is extremely unfortunate and stupid. (8)

[Note—¹According to the scriptures, a Jiva, the living being, roams around in 84 lakh births before he gets a human body. 1 lakh = 1,00,000. Refer: Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 44 below (i.e. 7/44/4).

To say that the Jiva, the living being, wondered in so many lives and passed through so many bodies before he could assume the body of a human being was the way our ancient sages and seers expressed what modern science has established—that the human race is the pinnacle of evolution which was set in motion by the creation of a single-celled organism such as the amoeba, the paramecium or the bacteria. Gradually as this world evolved, the complexities of the physical structure of the body went on increasing, till we had the monkeys and the chimpanzees. And then finally came the human beings, the upper rung of the evolutionary ladder. So many factors impinge during the long journey of the atomic Atma from its one-celled habitat to the multi-tissue and most complex habitat known as the human being that unknown and unpredictable things could have happened to it on the way. Hence, the very fact that the Atma, the spark of life known as the 'soul' or the 'pure consciousness', has managed to steadily climb the ladder to reach this citadel is in itself a rare achievement.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2, 5 that precede Doha no. 44 below.

Lord Ram has told sage Kaagbhusund the same thing that he favours human beings more than all other forms of the Jiva (living being), though it is a fact that the entire creation, consisting of both the movable as well as the immovable creatures, is his off-spring and has been created by him—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 86.

In Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 9-12 that precede Doha no. 121, sage Kaagbhusund tells Garud that—“There is no other form (body) that is as good and desirable as the body of the human being. All the creatures of this world consisting of inanimate as well as animate things yearn to acquire it. The human body is the stepping stone to attain both the heaven as well as the hell. It is also the mean by which a creature can hope to find his final liberation and deliverance from the cycle of transmigration in this world. It also grants Gyan, Vairagya and Bhakti. {That is, the Jiva can obtain these three fruits of truthful spiritual knowledge as enshrined in the scriptures, practice the eclectic virtues of renunciation, detachment and dispassion, as well as devotion, dedication and submission for the Lord God through the medium of the human body.} If a Jiva is stupid enough not to properly use this golden opportunity to worship the Supreme Being and have devotion for the Lord to ensure their secure destiny and spiritual well-being then they are like the idiot who throws as precious gem to grab a worthless piece of glass.”

The Gods do not have a physical body and form; they live in a Spirit form. Though this form has its merits, but it also has its demerits. For instance, the Gods depend upon the humans for their sustenance by way of offerings made by the latter during religious rituals and fire sacrifices. That is why the demons led by their king Ravana prevented sages and hermits from doing fire sacrifices and other religious duties so that their arch enemies, the Gods, would be deprived of nourishment and ultimately starve to death. This fact is stated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 181 and its preceding Chapai line nos. 5-8.

Another reason of saying that the human form is more worthy than that of the Gods is because Mukti (liberation and deliverance) of the Atma is obtainable only through its auspicious deeds done through the medium of a body, and the human being has this privilege which the Gods lack as they do not have a body. The Jiva's Atma can, in other words, use this physical body of a human being to obtain its final Moksha (emancipation and salvation), something it cannot achieve as a God. This is because when the Atma's accumulated good effects of the auspicious deeds done by it in its previous life as a Jiva, which had made it into a 'God' is exhausted, it has to go back to its earlier form as a Jiva with a physical body, instead of directly finding Mukti or Moksha from the level of the God form. In other words, there will be a time when the God's accumulated treasure of auspicious fruits is exhausted, and then the Atma that has assumed this non-physical form will have to revert to the form of a Jiva with a physical body. It clearly implies that Mukti or Moksha is obtainable only through the medium of the gross form of the body, one of which is the human body. Compared to the other forms of the Jiva this human body is rated highly because a human being can do many auspicious things which any of the other forms of the Jiva cannot do—such as for example making charities and doing religious duties including making offerings to Gods. The latter is of great importance because the Gods take care of all the functions of creation and act on behalf of the Supreme Being as his sentinels and subordinates who are assigned specific duties so that the Supreme Being is able to regulate the world in an orderly manner.

One has the misconception that the reward of leading an auspicious and righteous way of life is to attain heaven as the ultimate boon. This thinking is

erroneous and fallacious because even if one attains heaven and a stature equivalent to the Gods, a time will come when all the accumulated treasure of good deeds which enabled the Jiva to attain heaven will be exhausted, and then with no back-up to fall back upon, the Jiva will be forced to come back and take a birth again in this mortal world. In other words, even after obtaining heaven there is no certainty of eternal peace, bliss and happiness. The only difference between heavenly pleasures and comfort and their worldly counterparts is the duration of enjoyment—the life in this mortal world is short as compared to the span of life as a God. But that is the end; sufferings do not cease completely and permanently even for the residents of heaven. This fact is clearly endorsed below in Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 44.

These facts are endorsed in the next lines in an unequivocal term.

²The fact that Moksha can be attained by a Jiva in the form of a human being instead of as a God has been explained in the note to line no. 7 above.

The path followed by a Jiva's true self, i.e. his Atma, upon death have elaborately been described in the following Upanishads—(i) Subalo Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda Upanishad, canto 2, verse no. 4; canto 14, verse no. 1; and canto 15, verse no. 1. (ii) Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, 3/2/11—13, 3/9/28, 5/10, 5/11 and 6/2/1—16. And in (iii) Chandogya Upanishad, 5/3/1—5/10/10 of the Sam Veda tradition.

In fact, the Brihad Aranyak Upanishad says in its Canto 6, Brahman 2, verse no. 15 that the Atma's final liberation and deliverance is obtained by living an auspicious life as a human being. This is because it is through this form that the Atma can perform many spiritual endeavours that are not possible in other forms.

There are countless advantages of a human body over other forms that the Atma gets due to a variety of reasons, both the lower forms of so many other non-human forms as other creatures all having a physical body, as well as the exalted Gods who live in the heaven without a physical body. As has been said earlier, it is through the human body that the Jiva's Atma can do many auspicious deeds and enter willingly into many spiritual endeavours which is not possible for it to do in any other form.

Human being is like the 'emperor' of the physical world, and if an emperor does not ensure a comfortable life for himself and secure his future, who will? He has all the means and wherewithal to fulfill all his desires; he has just to mention his wish and the subordinates almost fall upon each other to carry out his orders to please him. Likewise, a human being can use this golden opportunity to secure a sound spiritual future for himself—and it is to break free from the shackle of birth and death to find his final liberation and deliverance. If unfortunately he misses this opportunity it will be highly stupid of him like a person who first pawns his pot of gold and then goes out begging for money?

The human body is said to have many doors. According to the Annapurna Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 3, verse no. 7, there are *five* doors of the body through which the mind wanders out into the external world and becomes aware of it. These five doors refer to the five organs of perception of the body—viz. the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue and the skin. Now, let us see what this Upanishad says—

“Verse no. 7 = The body of the creature has five ‘doors’. These five doors are actually the five sense organs of perception such as the eye etc. The mind ventures out into the world through these five doors. In other words, the mind perceives the external world through these five sense organs. You (Nidagh) must think in this term.

{Just like a man goes out of the house through the door to see the world outside, the mind wanders into the outside world and ‘sees’ it through the five organs of perception in the body. For instance, the mind ‘sees’ the sights of the world through the organ known as the eye, hears its noises and sounds through the organ known as the ear, smells its scents through the organ known as the nose, tastes through the organ known as the tongue, and feels the world through the organ known as the skin. These organs of perception of the body employ the medium of the mind to make the Atma aware of the existence of the majestic world with its numerous charms and fascinating forms.

It follows that if one closes these so-called doors, the mind would not be able to perceive anything of the external world because it would not be able to venture out into it. The world would cease to exist for the mind. Hence, if one is able to exercise control over the sense organs of perception of the body, one would easily prevent the mind from wandering out into the material world, getting enthused by its fascinating temptations, and then falling prey to its magnificent charms, however illusionary they are. Once trapped in the maze of delusions and falsehoods, the creature finds it exceedingly difficult to get out. The result of exercising control over the sense organs of the body is a restrained mind, a calmed and rested mind that would not be overwhelmed by the stupendously magnificent scene that unfolds before it as soon as it steps out into this colourful and flamboyant world which is like a stage-managed scene created by a magician. Such a mind would not be the cause of any restlessness and agitation for the aspirant.} (7).”

According to some Upanishads, there are *nine* so-called doors of the body, and they are two ears, two eyes, two nostrils, one mouth, one anus, and one urethra. Refer: (i) Krishna Yajur Veda tradition—Shwetashwatar Upanishad, 3/18; Yog Tattva Upanishad, verse no. 141; and Kshuriko-panishad, verse nos. 2-5. (ii) Sam Veda—Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 107. (iii) Atharva Veda—Bhavana Upanishad, verse no.2/1.

Similarly, according to some philosophers, there are *ten* Doors, and they include Brahm Randhra present at the top of the head as the tenth door besides the above nine doors.

According to Katho-panishad, Canto 2, Valli 2, verse no. 1, there are *eleven* doors of the body. They are the following—two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, one mouth, navel, anus, genitals and Brahm-randhra (the hair like slit on the top of the head).

An ascetic uses this last ‘door’ known as the Brahm-randhra to help his life-wind known as the Pran to leave the physical gross body and escape from its clutches. This leads to his Kaivalya Mukti—i.e. once his Pran (which represents both his ‘vital airs’ as well as the ‘consciousness’ that keep his body alive) leaves the physical gross body and escapes through the Brahm-randhra, it never returns back into the body as this is a one-way door.

The other reason for the Pran not returning back inside the body, even if it wants to do so, is that as soon as it emerges out of the confines of the body, it expands in volume immediately. While the Pran was inside the body it had occupied the whole subtle space present in it, and as soon as it comes out it expands automatically to fill the entire space outside it, i.e. the space as vast as the surrounding sky. The volume of the vital winds/airs becomes so huge that now it cannot constrict its self to re-enter the body through this tiny aperture known as the Brahm-randhra. Since this is a one-way escape, it is called ‘Kaivalya Mukti’—a freedom which is one time and final.]

दो०. सो परत्र दुख पावइ सिर धुनि धुनि पछिताइ ।
कालहि कर्महि ईस्वरहि मिथ्या दोष लगाइ ॥ ४३ ॥

dōhā.

sō paratra dukha pāva'i sira dhuni dhuni pachitā'i.
kālahi karmahi īsvaraḥi mithyā dōṣa lagā'i. 43.

Hence, a Jiva who does not use his human form to attain Moksha comes to sorrows and suffers in grief both in his present life as well as in his future lives. [He has lost the chance to attain everlasting peace, bliss and happiness; he has to suffer countless horrors that accompany the Jiva's wonderings through the dark and unknown lybrinthine alleys of countless births in this deluding world.]

In frustration and in dismay, he beats his head, becomes remorseful, and blames in vain the Time (circumstances, destiny etc.), his Karma (deeds and actions) and the Gods for his misfortunes and miseries (instead of having any introspection and finding fault right within his own self). (Doha no. 43)

[Note—If a man does not use the golden opportunity to attain spiritual peace and bliss even though the scriptures continue to show him the path and the Lord God himself comes down upon earth to lead by example, if he continues in his old dirty ways of doing just the opposite of what the scriptures say and what the Lord himself says, then clearly he has no right to blame Time, Karma and Gods for his misfortune. He has himself to blame for his miseries. For instance, if a patient does not take medicines as prescribed by the doctor or follow his instructions regarding the precautions he ought to take, then he has no right to blame the doctor or the efficacy of the medicine in being able to cure him.

A remarkable aspect of this Doha is the use of the word 'Ishwar'. Normally it means 'Lord God', the Supreme Being. But here it refers to those supernatural powers of creation or Nature over which a person has no control. Since such powers are controlled by the Lord God, it is deemed that all their influences upon the man's destiny are also controlled indirectly by the Lord God. This term 'Ishwar' should not be confused by the term 'Deva' which means God. These are the junior Gods who simply act on the instructions of the Supreme God.

Now, Lord Ram himself is a personified form of the Supreme Being, so he indirectly tells his audience that if you do not listen to me and do not mend your ways, then later on don't ever blame me, the Ishwar, for your sufferings; I warn you!

The ideas expressed in the forgoing verses are further explained in Goswami Tulsidas' another classical Book of Prayers known as "Vinai Patrika" in its verse nos. 201 and 202. This book 'Vinai Patrika' has been prepared and published independently in English by the humble author of the present book "Ram Charit Manas" (i.e. Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia).]

चौ०. एहि तन कर फल बिषय न भाई । स्वर्गउ स्वल्प अंत दुखदाई ॥ १ ॥
नर तनु पाइ बिषयँ मन देहीं । पलटि सुधा ते सठ बिष लेहीं ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

ēhi tana kara phala biṣaya na bhā'ī. svarga'u svalpa anta dukhadā'ī. 1.
nara tanu pā'i biṣayam̐ mana dēhīm. palaṭi sudhā tē saṭha biṣa lēhīm. 2.

{In the following verses, i.e. Chaupai line nos. 1-8 and their accompanying Doha no. 44, Lord Ram explains the utility of the human body and the use to which it must be put by a wise person.}

The reward of getting this human body is not to become indulgent in enjoying the sense organs and their respective objects in this world. What to talk of life in this mortal world, even the life in the heaven is short-lived and ends one day¹. (1)

If a Jiva (i.e. a living being) is fortunate enough to get the body of a human being, but mistakenly, out of ignorance, or willingly due to the inability to resist temptations and exercise self-restraint, misuses it (human body) to get involved in enjoyment of sense organs and fulfillment of their endless demands for gratification by pursuing their respective sensory perceptions in the world of material objects—then they are like stupid fools who overturn a pot of ambrosia and barter it for poison². (2)

[Note—¹Refer: Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 43 above, and the notes appended to them.

²The human body is like the pot of ambrosia because it is the medium in which the 'pure consciousness' known as the holy Atma or soul lives. It is also the habitat of the 'Pran', the vital spark of life represented by the vital winds.

The Upanishads have universally said that the human body is the abode of the various Gods. The Rig Veda's Aieteriya Upanishad has clearly stated that when the human body was created as an image of the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic form of the supreme Brahm, all the Gods entered this body to take up their residence in it. For instance, the Sun God lives in the eye; the Moon God in the heart; the Wind God as the Pran or vital winds; the Fire God as the warmth of the body; the Water God as the fluid part of the body; the Earth Goddess as the grosser parts of the body such as bones and skin; the Sky God as the subtle space between the tissues and organs inside the body; and so on. Refer--Aieteriya Upanishad, Canto 1, sections 1-3 of the Rig Veda tradition.

For the purpose of our immediate discussion we deduce that the human body is a 'replica' of the macrocosmic, invisible and all-encompassing divine body of the Supreme Being. Well, it is now clear why the human body is said to be the most exalted form in the whole creation—it is 'replica of the Viraat Purush, the supreme Brahm'. None of Gods has this unique privilege. Naturally therefore, if a man is so stupid as to waste it in pursuing pecuniary benefits or material things that are perishable and worthless in the long run, would he not be called short-sighted, ill-witted and a block-head? Who else will be classified as such if not a man who wastes his life in pursuing the pleasures of the sense organs that are extremely selfish, whose life is spent in an attempt at deriving comfort from the world which is a mine of miseries, and who thinks that he will continue to enjoy forever whatever he has acquired in spite of seeing death all around him and being repeatedly told that his own body will be dead and gone one day?]

ताहि कबहुँ भल कहइ न कोई । गुंजा ग्रहइ परस मनि खोई ॥ ३ ॥
आकर चारि लच्छ चौरासी । जोनि भ्रमत यह जिव अबिनासी ॥ ४ ॥

tāhi kabahum̐ bhala kaha'i na kōī. guṇjā graha'i parasa mani khōī. 3.
ākara cāri laccha caurāsī. jōni bhramata yaha jiva abināsī. 4.

Who will call a man wise and intelligent who throws away a precious gem known as the Paras Mani (a magical stone that is able to convert any metal into the precious metal gold by its mere touch; the philosopher's stone), and accepts in its place the worthless seed of the peppercorn (known as 'Gunja'; it is small red-and-black seed of the plant *Abrus precatorius*)¹. (3)

The Jiva (the living being) is an imperishable entity (because this word refers to the Atma, the soul which is a subtle, sublime and ethereal entity known as pure consciousness that never perishes, that is eternal and infinite).

This Jiva has roamed around in numerous births, and having done so for 84 lakh times he comes to assume the body of the human being². (4)

[Note—¹There is no comparison in the value of the Paras Mani and the Gunja. But a stupid man thinks that the Mani is useless because he would not be able to taste it and use it in his food as spice to jack up its flavour like with the case of the Gunja. So he barters the precious Paras Mani for the worthless Gunja.

Likewise, a foolish man bargains his precious human body for enjoyment of the senses and the world instead of utilizing it to attain Moksha or emancipation and salvation of his self, the Atma, the soul.

²The obvious reason why the Jiva had to go on wandering from one birth to another is its 'imperishability'. The 'Jiva', meaning 'an entity that lives and has the vital spark of life in it' does not mean the physical body of the entity known by this term—because this Jiva is imperishable while the physical body died at the end of each life. Then, what or who is the Jiva? The 'Jiva' is the subtle Atma or soul or Spirit that lives inside this gross physical body. This Atma is the true identity of the Jiva, the living being. When the body dies due to some cause, this Atma comes out of it, and then it re-enters another body depending upon a number of factors—such as the un-fulfilled desires that the Jiva had in its previous life, the chain of reactions for the deeds done by the Jiva during that life, and so on.

The basic concept is that *the creature attains that place which it desires for at the time of death*—refer Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse no. 12 which is very explicit on this point. Further, it also depends upon the creature's mental awareness and conception of the what constitutes the 'Truth'—refer Brihad Aranyak Canto 6, Brahman 1, verse no. 1-6.

The Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, 4/4/6 explicitly says that a creature goes to adopt that gross body upon which its subtle self is infatuated or attracted at the time of death or leaving the old body.

The Naradparivrajak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, in its Canto 5, verse no. 23 clearly states that—"A person obtains a destiny, a destination and a new body according to what his thoughts were and what he had been wishing at the time of his death. This is not mere hearsay but affirmed and endorsed by the scriptures (23)."

The Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Mundak (Canto) 3, section 2, verse no. 1 asserts that if a person worships the Supreme Being *selflessly*, i.e. with no rewards for such worship in mind, he is able to break free from the cycle of birth and death. Its Mundak 3, section 2, verse no. 2 say that a *man who has no desires* or wishes unfilled, i.e. a man who is fully contented, does not take a birth again, while a person who has unfulfilled desires would take a new birth according to the type of desires he has left at the time of death. Mundak 3, section 1, verse no. 10 says that the destiny of a person depends upon two things—one, his unrequited desires, and two, the type of habitat or environment he wishes to live in.

The *destiny* of the person depends upon the *type of desires he has* while doing deeds in this world. This is stated in Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 9-10, 13-16; Canto 3, verse no. 7, 9-10; Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse no. 33, Canto 4, Brahman 4, verse nos. 4-14.

What happens to *ignorant people* after death is explained in Brihad Aranyak 4/4/1.

Why does a creature take a new birth is explained in Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 3, verse no. 24; Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 3, verse no. 9-10; Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, 4/4/6.

The Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, 4/4/3 describes how the Atma leaves the old body at the time of death and enters a new body just like a caterpillar leaving an old leaf or twig and alighting on a new one. It reaches the end of the old leaf or twig, contracts its body, lifts its upper part, expands the body to get hold of the tip of the new leaf or twig, and then withdraws its body from the old habitat completely to make the new one its abode.

The question *who is a Jiva* has been explained in the following Upanishads—(i) Paingal Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 12, and the whole of Canto 2; (ii) The Atharva Veda's Pashupat Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 12; (iii) The Tripadvibhūt Maha Narayan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4, paragraph nos. 9, 11-12; (iv) Goswami Tulsidas' epic narration of Lord Ram's story popularly known as the Ram Charit Manas (the 'Ramayana') describes who a Jiva is in its Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 117.

The Paingal Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 12, and the whole of Canto 2 is dedicated to describe *who a Jiva is*.

"That all-knowing and omniscient Ishwar (the supreme Lord of creation) invoked his own stupendous powers that created illusions and delusions in this creation, called his 'Maya', which allowed him to assume any form that he wished, and in conjunction with it (or joining hands with his own Maya, or allowing himself to become veiled in his own delusions) he entered the body of the individual creature. He was so enamoured with his own creation, and especially when he allowed his Maya to accompany him, that the same cosmic Lord who is beyond comprehension of even the wisest of men and the reach of the holy scriptures, such as the Vedas and the Purans, became engulfed or surrounded by 'Moha' (worldly attractions, infatuations, attachments, endearments, longings, love and affections). With this twin fault—viz. Maya and Moha—that supreme Lord who has no attributes and names became a 'worldly creature'. {To wit, when Maya found out that it's Lord is getting interested in and developing affection for what he has created, it went ahead to fulfill the wishes of its Lord like a faithful and obedient servant would. Maya went literally overboard to please the Lord, and knowing that he might balk and suffer from indecision as to whether or not to allow himself to plunge in the formidable web of creation that he

plans to unfold (because Brahm was an enlightened Being, and he would soon realise his failings), Maya showed its sly hand and made him get infatuated and enamoured with the creation to such an extent that the Lord lost awareness of who is was, and consequently became engrossed in this world like a fish takes to water at the first opportunity. Say, if this can happen to the Ishwar whose Maya did not think twice in casting its evil spell upon its own Lord, how can an ordinary creature can ever expect to be free from its tentacles!}

Therefore, the supreme Ishwar, now manifested as a creature, the Jiva, began to treat himself as a doer of deeds and an enjoyer of or a sufferer from the consequences of those deeds because he became associated with the three types of bodies that he had assumed in his form of a worldly creature.

When he got associated with the body having three divisions (gross, subtle and causal), he naturally lived through all the states through which these bodies pass during their sojourn in this mortal world—such as the waking state, the dreaming state, the deep sleep state, and the Turiya state of existence. Further, since he had assumed all the characteristics of a creature's body, he assumed that he would die like an ordinary creature. Thus, the immortal Lord became mortal! {To wit, once Maya and Moha had their upper hands, the Lord of creation was misled to believe that he is an ordinary mortal being who has a mortal body, undergoes the three states of existence so characteristic of the body, that he would die, and that he would enjoy or suffer the results of his deeds.}

As a result he went round and round like the bullock turning the water-wheel or the potter's wheel which goes on endlessly turning; he got trapped in this wheel of a continuous cycle of birth and death (12)."

Why is a Jiva trapped in the endless cycle of birth and death in this world has been answered in the Atharva Veda's Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 4, paragraph no. 13, and Canto 5, paragraph nos. 3-8. This is in addition to the explanation given by Lord Ram below in Chaupai line no. 5.]

फिरत सदा माया कर प्रेरा । काल कर्म सुभाव गुन घेरा ॥ ५ ॥

कबहुँक करि करुना नर देही । देत ईस बिनु हेतु सनेही ॥ ६ ॥

phirata sadā māyā kara prērā. kāla karma subhāva guna ghērā. 5.
kabahum̐ka kari karunā nara dēhī. dēta īsa binu hētu sanēhī. 6.

The Jiva falls in the trap laid out by Maya (the delusion creating powers of the Supreme Creator) which casts its magical veil of delusions around him that makes the creature continue to roam indefinitely in different births driven by his destiny and circumstances, his deeds and actions, his habits, temperaments and natural inclinations, and the various Gunas (qualities that govern his character, thought processes, emotions, behaviour, reactions to situations, mentality and attitude etc.)¹. (5)

The Isha (the Supreme Lord) often becomes very pitiful upon the Jiva (when he watches its wretched condition and sufferings). So out of his merciful and compassionate nature, the Isha grants the Jiva chance to assume the body of a human being. This is because the Lord is compassionate, merciful and affectionate by nature,

and he always is worried about the welfare and good of the Jiva who is none else but the Supreme Lord's own off-spring². (6)

[Note—¹It is very easy to visualize how this happens by way of an example. Suppose we cover a man with a thick blanket or blind-fold him. Then he is left to go wherever he wants in an open field without any support or guidance. One can well imagine what will happen. The case with the Jiva is identical. He is covered by the thick veil of Maya, and so he is unable to see his spiritual destination. He goes round and round like a bullock yoked to the water-wheel that pulls out water from the well to irrigate the farm. The bullock thinks that it has not reached its destination as it sees the same scene after each turn, so it continues to go round and round in its attempt to move ahead.

The veil of Maya traps the Jiva in the countless deeds he does, actions he takes, circumstances he has to face and overcome, the bad and good times that buffet him like the waves of the ocean tossing around the ship, and the numerous character traits that he carries along as his unique identification. All these things are controlled by Maya which uses the three classical Guna, known as the Sata Guna, the Raja Guna and the Tama Guna.

The Jiva forgets in this tumult his original nature and identity as being the Atma that is not the gross physical body but the pure Consciousness. He forgets in the mellee of life that everything that has upset him and robbed him of his peace are related to the gross body, and not to the subtle Atma. The very thought that he has roamed in so many births, that he will die one day and will take a new birth, either as a member of the upper rung of the evolutionary ladder or demoted to a lower rung, proves that Maya has made the Jiva forget who he actually is. Remember: the Jiva is not the gross physical body that takes any birth, grows old and dies; the Jiva is the pure conscious Atma that is eternal, imperishable and constant. A Jiva becomes liberated when he realises this basic fact of existence; this realisation is his enlightenment; it is his deliverance from Maya.

Thus liberated and unbound, he is deemed to be free or 'Mukta'.

²An exactly the same idea is expressed in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 86 along with Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precedes it in which the Lord tells Kaagbhusund as follows—"All the creatures in this world have been created by me (the Supreme Being known as Ram). I love them equally as all of them are my off-springs. Out of them, I love the humans more. Out of them, I prefer Dwij (Brahmins); out of them I prefer those who are well versed in the Vedas; out of such Brahmins I prefer those who actually follow the teachings of the Vedas (instead of just muttering their hymns and incantations); out of such Brahmins I prefer those who have developed Vairagya or renunciation and dispassion; out of them I prefer those who have gained 'Gyan' (knowledge of spiritual matters and having wisdom); out of such people I prefer those who have 'Vigyan' (an in-depth clinical knowledge of spiritual matters, leading to self-realisation and enlightenment); and out of them I prefer those who are my ardent followers and are totally dependent upon me, for whom I am the only destination and refuge, the only source of succour and solace, and the only source of help and happiness. Even Brahma, the creator, is equal to an ordinary being for me if he has no Bhakti (devotion), while the humblest and lowly of all the creatures is dearest to me and closest to my heart if he has Bhakti in him."

When the merciful and gracious Lord sees the Jiva grieving and feeling wretched from the torments and tribulations from which he is suffering, greatly

desirous of getting freedom from the horrors of the endless cycle of birth and death if given a chance to do so, and making a vow that he will lead an auspicious life, follow the great tenets of the holy scriptures, diligently serve the Lord God to the best of his ability, and help the rest of his bretheren to come out of this quagmire themselves if he is extracted from the bog in which he finds himself trapped endlessly, the merciful and compassionate Lord feels very pity for the Jiva, and eager to provide him with the opportunity he seeks, the compassionate Lord gives the Jiva a chance to become a human being. It is to be noted here that the word 'Jiva' refers to the living being's true identity, and it is his Atma, the pure conscious soul, and not the gross body in which this Atma lives.

If the Jiva is happy in his present circumstances and life, the Lord does not interfere, as the Lord, being the supreme Father, wishes his off-spring to remain happy and cheerful. It is not that the Lord is unaware of the ill consequences of the numerous indulgences of the Jiva in his quest of happiness and joy, but the Lord gives him a lot of chance and freedom to have his full of enjoyments lest he would think the Lord is jealous of his happiness and accuse the Lord of snatching it away. This exactly had happened in the case of sage Narad when he wished to marry, inspite of the fact that he was a mendicant who should never even think so. When the Lord decided that if he allows Narad to marry it will be his ruin, he forcibly intervened and prevented this from happening. And what was the result? Narad accused the Lord of being jealous of him, of being selfish and partisan, and then cursed him vehemently. This curse was the basic reason why the Supreme Lord had to become a human being in the body of Lord Ram. This entire episode is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 128—to Doha no. 138.

So, the Lord waits quietly for the Jiva to pray to him for help. Then the Lord provides the Jiva the opportunity to become a human being. This answers the question 'if the Lord is merciful and compassionate, if he treats all his subjects equally, if he loves them equally, then why does he not make all the Jivas human beings?'

Say, will it not be absurd for an emperor to say that he is unhappy because he was unable to fulfill his wishes? Now, once a Jiva has got the form of a human being, he has no right to blame anyone if he does not use it to the best of its abilities in order to reach his declared goal of finding spiritual peace, bliss, rest and happiness for which the Jiva was so restless in other forms when he had pitifully prayed to the Lord God to provide him an opportunity for it, and the Lord had mercifully granted it to him?]

नर तनु भव बारिधि कहूँ बेरो । सन्मुख मरुत अनुग्रह मेरो ॥ ७ ॥

करनधार सदगुर दृढ़ नावा । दुर्लभ साज सुलभ करि पावा ॥ ८ ॥

nara tanu bhava bāridhi kahum̐ bērō. sanmukha maruta anugraha mērō. 7.

karanadhāra sadagura dr̥ḥa nāvā. durlabha sāja sulabha kari pāvā. 8.

The human body is like a ship to take the Jiva (the Atma; the living being) across the endless ocean represented by this world and its cycle of birth and death. And my* grace, mercy and compassion are like the favourable wind (that helps this boat to sail across this vast ocean). (7)

A wise Guru (moral preceptor, guide and teacher) is like the expert sailor who guides and manoeuvres the ship to its destination. He makes all the necessary things and accoutrements available for the Jiva (to enable him reach his spiritual destination like an expert sailor who takes the ship to its destination)². (8)

[Note—¹This analogy refers to the ships that had sails, and depended upon favourable wind to fill these sails to move across the ocean. Here the human body is likened to a boat or ship because like the latter which carries a passenger, the body too carries a passenger—and this passenger is the Atma, the pure conscious ‘self’ of the Jiva. The larger and sturdier the ship, the more steady it is and the more comfortable is the journey. That means, the Atma living inside the body of a human being finds its journey of life very easy, enjoyable and comfortable as compared to the other bodies it had lived in. This is because the human being is like an emperor of the animate world, and all the facilities made available by the Creator are available to him; he can command anything he likes, and the rest of the creatures are merely his servants.

The journey of the ship across the choppy waters of the ocean will be quicker if the wind is favourable and fills its sails to the full. The countless problems a Jiva faces in this world which tend to rock his boat heading towards his spiritual goal is like the choppy waters of the ocean, and the love, affection, mercy, compassion, grace and benevolence of the Lord that come to the devotee as blessings got for free are like the free wind that fills the sail of the ship and helps it move faster against all odds.

*Till now Lord Ram has used the word ‘Ishwar’, and now he says ‘my’ grace---. It clearly means that Lord Ram wishes to say that the ‘Ishwar’ I was referring to is no one else but ‘me’. This is true as the Lord is an incarnation of the Supreme Being known as Lord Vishnu, or by other names such as the Viraat Purush or Parmatma.

²The concept of ‘Guru’ has been explained in detail earlier as a note to Doha no. 35 of Aranya Kand.

Even as a ship needs an expert navigator and sailor to cross the surface of the ocean where there are no landmarks like those seen on land to act as guides for the lay passengers, the Jiva too needs the guidance of an expert teacher to show him along the path to his spiritual goal. Otherwise he will be lost in the wilderness. An expert Guru examines the disciple’s spiritual needs and decides the course of action according to his mental abilities, attitudes and nature. Just like all patients cannot be treated with the same medicine, and an expert doctor tackles each of them individually, prescribing different medicines for different patients, the expert Guru devises a unique plan for the individual Jiva.

The importance of a Guru has been stressed by Lord Ram to Sabari in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 35 where the Lord tells her “worshipping the holy feet of one’s Guru is the third (symbolic) form of Bhakti (of mine)”.

Then again, in Ram Charit Manas, 3/46/3, Lord Ram tells sage Narad that “Bhakti includes having affection for and showing respect to the holy feet of one’s Guru, the Lord God, and Vipra (Brahmins)”.

The horrible consequences of not showing due respect to the Guru had been experienced by the great sage Kaagbhusund. This entire episode is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 106, till Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 110 in which the sage describes how insulting his Guru led to Lord Shiva vehemently cursing him.

A Guru is a treasury of mercy, grace and compassion—refer: Ram Charit Manas, 7/106/8; 7/106 Kha. He has equanimity, neutrality, evenness of mind, and forbearance; he is free from anger and wrathfulness; he is a treasure-trove of wisdom, knowledge of the truth and enlightenment—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 107.]

दो०. जो न तरै भव सागर नर समाज अस पाइ ।
सो कृत निंदक मंदमति आत्माहन गति जाइ ॥ ४४ ॥

dōhā.

jō na tarai bhava sāgara nara samāja asa pā'i.
sō kṛta nindaka mandamati ātmāhana gati jā'i. 44.

A person who does not cross (i.e. find liberation from) this ocean-like world of transmigration inspite of being provided with all the facilities is indeed worthy of condemnation and contempt, is indeed most stupid, and he deserves punishment that a person who commits suicide gets. (Doha no. 44)

[Note—If the Atma does not find its liberation and deliverance even after being provided the vehicle of the human body, then surely it is committing suicide—it is cutting short the golden opportunity to enjoy eternal bliss and happiness, it is denying itself the chance to attain eternal beatitude and felicity, which is no less than committing suicide because when a person does so he is virtually murdering his own self. And murder is an unpardonable crime.]

In the human body, the Jiva does so many things, undertakes so many deeds and takes so many actions. He cannot say that he did not do anything as a human being. So, he has no excuse why he did not keep his promise that he had made to the Lord God in all his earlier lives that if the Lord gives him an opportunity and makes him a human being then he will do as ordered by the Lord and improve himself. If the human being can enjoy the sensual pleasures of the world, if he can relentlessly pursue the objects of the world and strive to gratify his sense organs, can't he do something for the Atma that lives inside his body helplessly, waiting for a chance to find freedom? Of course such a man is stupid and a block-head.

In verse no. 3 of the Ishawasya Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda it is said that those who commit suicide are condemned to become an evil spirit or a ghost.]

चौ०. जौं परलोक इहाँ सुख चहहू । सुनि मम बचन हृदयँ दृढ़ गहहू ॥ १ ॥
सुलभ सुखद मारग यह भाई । भगति मोरि पुरान श्रुति गाई ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

jauṁ paralōka ihāṁ sukha cahahū. suni mama bacana hṛdayaṁ dṛṛha gahahū. 1.

sulabha sukhada māraga yaha bhā'i. bhagati mōri purāna śruti gā'i. 2.

If you want happiness and peace that is available in the heaven (obtained upon death) in this world itself where you presently live, then you must listen to me attentively and make a firm resolve in your heart to obey what I say¹. (1)

Having my ‘Bhakti’, i.e. having devotion, dedication, submission and affection for me, is an easy and readily available path for your spiritual welfare and good. This is endorsed and reiterated by the ancient scriptures also, such as the Purans and the Srutis (Vedas)². (2)

[Note—¹This verse can be interpreted as follows as well—“If you want happiness and peace in your present life as well as in the afterlife (i.e. if you plan to go to heaven after death; if you wish to ensure a secure destiny for yourself), then you must listen to me attentively and make a firm resolve in your heart to obey what I say.”]

²In Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 16, Lord Ram tells Laxman that “I am very easily pleased by a person who offers Bhakti to me”. Or “The only thing that makes me easily pleased is the virtue known as ‘Bhakti’”.

The glory and significance of Bhakti has been extolled by Lord Ram later on while blessing the saintly crow Kaagbhusund. The Lord had was ready to grant Kaagbhusund anything he wanted to have, including Gyan (gnosis, enlightenment, self-realisation, true knowledge of the scriptures, and so on and so forth), but desisted from offering ‘Bhakti’ as a boon. Kaagbhusund was wise enough to set aside all grants and seek Bhakti instead. This wisdom and sagacity of the saintly crow pleased Lord Ram a lot, and the Lord expressed his appreciation while lauding Kaagbhusund and saying that he is indeed a very clever and wise one who has sought the gem-of-a-boon by seeking Bhakti from the Lord as the only blessing which he desires. Then the Lord goes on to enumerate the glories and importance of Bhakti for the spiritual welfare of a creature, saying that it is a panacea of all welfare and a bestower of all sorts of spiritual bliss, beatitude, joy and happiness. This episode is narrated in detail in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 83—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 88.]

ग्यान अगम प्रत्यूह अनेका । साधन कठिन न मन कहूँ टेका ॥ ३ ॥

करत कष्ट बहु पावड़ कोऊ । भक्ति हीन मोहि प्रिय नहिँ सोऊ ॥ ४ ॥

gyāna agama pratyūha anēkā. sādhana kaṭhina na mana kahum̐ ṭēkā. 3.
karata kaṣṭa bahu pāva'i kō'ū. bhakti hīna mōhi priya nahim̐ sō'ū. 4.

The path of Gyan (knowledge) is difficult and riddled with obstacles. It is difficult to tread upon it, difficult to be successful in it, and difficult for the mind and heart to maintain their momentum on this path¹. (3)

Even if someone attains success by following the path of Gyan, I do not favour him because Bhakti is very dear to me². (4)

[Note—¹Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1 and 5 that precede Doha no. 84.

Two paths have been outlined by Lord Ram here for the all-round spiritual welfare of the creature. One is the path of Bhakti, and the other is the path of Gyan. The path of Bhakti is extremely easy as compared to the path of Gyan.

In Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai 11-16 and stanza 'ka' of Doha 115, and Chaupai 1-8 and stanza 'ka' of Doha 116, to Doha 120, the crow saint Kaagbhusund preaches Garud, the legendary eagle, the mount of Lord Vishnu, the difference between Gyan and Bhakti. In the course of the discourse it is made clear why the path of Bhakti is superior to and better than the path of Gyan in order to attain one's spiritual goal of attaining Mukti or Moksha (liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation for the soul). Let us briefly see what this learned sage has to say—

“Garud asked sage Kaagbhusund—‘Please tell me oh Lord all the differences between Gyan and Bhakti’. Kaagbhusund replied—‘There is no difference between them, both of them are equally potent and efficacious in eliminating the horrors and torments of birth and death. Those who are exalted in knowledge however point out some differences between them. I’ll tell these to you, listen carefully.

Gyan (wisdom, knowledge of truth and reality, erudition and sagacity, spiritual expertise and enlightenment), Vairagya (renunciation and dispassion), Yoga (meditation leading to a union with the Supreme Being), and Vigyan (true realisation leading to unequivocal conviction and faith on the supreme and transcendental Reality and Truth)—these are all masculine in nature and regarded as the muscular male who has strength and powers but can be easily corrupted. A man is physically stronger and more powerful as compared to his female counterpart, and this is right from their birth as a natural phenomenon. Only a man who is resolute and firm in his mind can remain unattached and forsake being lured by the deluding and entrapping charms of a woman, and not the one who is lascivious and passionate and has turned away from the holy feet of Sri Ram”. {Uttar Kand, Chaupai 11-16, and stanza 'ka' of Doha 115.}

The path of Gyan is like a double-edged sword. Oh king of birds, it does not take long to fall (slip, commit errors) and get injured (harmed) in this difficult path. Only those who can successfully tread across it become eligible to attain the spiritually exalted stature of 'Kaivalya', the spiritual state of existence that is one of its only kind, is the most exalted and the best. {It is known as 'Moksha'—final emancipation and salvation of the soul.} (Chaupai line nos. 1-2).

The great saints and sages (those who are wise and experienced in this matter), the Purans and the Vedas (the primary scriptures), as well as the rest of the scriptures (the secondary scriptures) affirm unanimously that the attainment of the exalted spiritual stature of 'Kaivalya' is extremely difficult and riddled with difficulties. But oh the wise one (Garud), the same 'Mukti' (beatitude, the final emancipation and salvation of the soul that is known as Kaivalya) is attainable automatically, without facing any difficulties or making any special efforts to acquire it due to the grace of Lord Ram which comes when one sincerely worships the Lord and has developed profound devotion and deep affection for him. {Put simply it means that the best kind of spiritual state of existence marked by the highest form of beatitude and bliss, and the best spiritual goal of the soul to obtain its emancipation and salvation are obtained when one adopts the path of 'Bhakti' instead of pursuing the path of 'Gyan'. It is true that Gyan is very powerful and potent, but it is like a male who can be seduced by a cunning woman. On the contrary, Bhakti is like a soft-hearted and kind woman who cannot be seduced by another woman no matter how cunning she might be!} (Chaupai line nos. 3-4).

Listen, the king of birds (Garud). Just as it is impossible that water can stay anywhere if there is no solid ground to support it no matter how hard a person tries to do so (for liquid water needs a hard surface for support), the beatitude and bliss of Mukti is not sustainable with the ground (support) of Bhakti. (Chaupai line nos. 5-6).

Therefore, those who are wise and intelligent prefer to have Bhakti instead of Mukti. {This is because if one has Bhakti, the best form of Mukti that is known as 'Kaivalya' would be easily available. It must be noted that the term 'Mukti' does not necessarily mean Kaivalya, as there are many kinds of Muktis, which broadly mean freedom—such as Jivan Mukti, Videha Mukti, Mukti from worldly problems, Mukti from bodily sufferings, Mukti from bondages etc. But these do not necessarily mean spiritual Mukti of the highest kind—it is called the Kaivalya Mukti. This sort of Mukti is attained by two paths—one is the path of Gyan, and the other is the path of Bhakti. As outlined above, the wise ones choose the latter over the former—i.e. they prefer Bhakti over Gyan. Once Bhakti comes, Kaivalya Mukti is on its way automatically.}

The benefit of following the path of Bhakti is that the basis of all spiritual ailments, such as remaining trapped in the endless cycle of birth and death in this mortal world, which is 'Avidya' (lack of correct spiritual knowledge), gets automatically eliminated, without making any special effort for getting rid of it, just like the case of one eating some delicious food to quench his hunger or for taste but as soon as the food enters the body it begins to get digested because the digestive fire burning inside the body is triggered automatically on its own, and digests the food silently without making it known to the eater. Say, is a man not a dumb fool if this miraculous Bhakti does not find favour with him? (Chaupai line nos. 7-10).

Oh the enemy of serpents (i.e. Garud, who is an Eagle and is regarded an enemy of serpents as it immediately snaps them up if he happens to see them anywhere)! It is just not possible to get across this vast ocean represented by the world of transmigration if one does not become firmly convinced of the eclectic view 'I am a humble servant, and the Lord God is the one whom I serve'. Be firmly established in this view-point, and have steady and robust devotion and affection in the holy feet of Lord Ram. Those Jivas (living beings) who worship and have devotion for Lord Ram—the almighty Lord of creation who can turn the inanimate entities into animate entities, and vice versa—are indeed most fortunate and blessed. (Doha no. 119).

Oh Garud! Herein above I had elucidated the principles governing Gyan. Now listen carefully about Bhakti which is like a priceless Gem.

Lord Ram's Bhakti (having devotion, affection, love, faith, belief in the Lord; submission and surrender before him; serving him selflessly) is like a Gem known as 'Chintaamani'—one that removes all worries. In whichever heart it lives, there is illumination in it, day and night. {To wit, any person who has given Bhakti a chance to live in his heart does not have to worry about his well-being any longer, as this now becomes the responsibility of Lord Ram to whom Bhakti is dedicated.}

Unlike the illumination (of spiritual wisdom, enlightenment and self-realisation) that Gyan produces, for which butter, lamp and wick are needed (i.e. for which many virtues/qualities need to be fostered and carefully nurtured as outlined in the verses quoted above), the illumination produced by Bhakti is self-created; it is an incandescent light that does not need any external aid to illuminate the inner-self of the Jiva.

Besides the illumination created by this Gem, the second natural benefit is that poverty (represented by the need to seek happiness and bliss in the outside world of

material sense objects) never troubles the bearer of this Gem (because the presence of a 'Gem' in the heart itself means that the inner treasury is full of riches, the 'spiritual riches' in the form of beatitude, tranquility and contentedness that lead to bliss and happiness).

The third benefit is that the gust of wind represented by temptations of the material objects of the world and the desire of the sense organs for gratification cannot blow out the light of this Gem (because the light emanating from this Gem is self-generated, unlike the case of the light emanating from the lamp representing Gyan which depends upon external efforts as detailed earlier). (Chaupai line nos. 1-4).

The self-effusing light from this Gem helps to eliminate the darkness created by Avidya (lack of Vidya; lack of true and correct spiritual knowledge). The irritating group of insects represented by such negativities as Mada (arrogance, haughtiness, ego, pride and vanity) etc. fail to disturb the Jiva and dirty the environs of the Gem. {In the case of an oil lamp, the insects are attracted to its light in their hordes, dance around its flame, get burnt, and die, littering the area around the flame and the lamp. Sometimes it often also happens that they die and fall in the oil and cover its surface with their carcasses, thereby suffocating the wick of its space and the flame of its air, and this result in the flame gradually dying away. In the case of the Gem no such thing can happen because there is no physical flame to attract the insects.}

The net effect is that the person in whose heart Bhakti resides, the evil-mongering wicked fellows such as Kaam (worldly passions), Krodha (anger), Lobha (greed) and their like, do not dare to come near him. (Chaupai line nos. 5-6).

For such a man, poison becomes nectar, and enemy becomes a friend. No one can expect to have peace, happiness and comfort without this miraculous Gem. Such a person who possesses this Gem does not have to suffer from any of the grievous mental diseases which torment all the rest of the creatures. (Chaupai line nos. 7-8).

In whose heart resides the Gem representing Bhakti for Lord Ram, verily such a person never has to suffer even a trace of misery and grief even in his dream. Therefore, a person who makes diligent effort to acquire this Gem of Bhakti is deemed to be the most wise, clever, intelligent and fortunate amongst all men. (Chaupai line nos. 9-10).

All said and done, this Gem is accessible only when Lord Ram becomes graceful and favourable upon the devotee. This too is very easy (because the Lord is gracious and merciful and obliging by nature, and a simple request or prayer is sufficient to make the Lord grant this Gem to the devotee), but the irony is that still the unfortunate man rejects it. [In the absence of true knowledge and awareness of who Lord Ram is, the ignorant man thinks that he is submitting himself to heresy, and prefers to follow the troublesome and arduous path of Gyan in his endeavour to seek Mukti for himself.] (Chaupai line nos. 11-12).

The scriptures such as the Vedas and the Purans are like the holy Mountains; the divine story of Lord Ram, with its numerous versions and interpretations, are like the numerous mines (caves) in them (where spiritual secrets lie hidden and buried); the many sages and saints are the wise ones who know about them and their sacred location (i.e. they can unravel the mysteries of the story and explain them to the eager hearer); and the wise intellect and mind are like the spade, the shovel and the pick-axe which are to be used to unearth the gems hidden in them (i.e. to unravel the holiness, the divinity and spiritual message contained in the story of Lord Ram). Oh Garud, the two eyes needed to see this treasure are represented by the twin virtues of Gyan and Vairagya (i.e. one must have a deep and penetrating intellect to understand the import of the message contained in the divine story, and he must have the virtue of

renunciation and detachment from this world so that he can concentrate upon benefiting from this knowledge without getting constantly distracted and disturbed by the tug and pull of the mundane world). (Chaupai line nos. 13-14).

A man who searches for this Gem of Bhakti with due sincerity and devotion (commitment and diligence) is sure to find it. This Gem is a treasury full of all happiness and joy for him; it is a giver of all happiness and joy to him. In my (Kaagbhusund's) view, the devotee of Lord Ram is superior to the Lord himself. (Chaupai line nos. 15-16).

If Lord Ram is the ocean, then the wise men (who are devoted to him and possess the Gem of Bhakti) are like the rain-bearing clouds. {The ocean is full of water, but it is of no use to the world because its water cannot irrigate fields and produce crop. The salty and dirty water of the ocean evaporates to form clouds. The water molecules in the cloud are free from their salty origin; they are clean and sweet. When this water, which has its origin in the ocean, begins to shower down upon the earth as rain, it fosters life and greenery everywhere. Harvest and life directly depend upon rain-water, and not at all upon the ocean, though the origin of the rain is in the ocean which is a vast reservoir of water, but the rain benefits the population more directly. This is exactly what is meant here. Though the divine story of Lord Ram is a vast reservoir of spirituality and bliss, its benefit can be enjoyed only when it is explained by wise men, and when the seeker accesses the key to his happiness and bliss, which is Bhakti.}

In the same way, if Lord Hari is like the tree of sandalwood, the saints and sages are like the gust of soft wind (that takes the sweet fragrance of the sandalwood and helps to spread it far and wide). {The saints and sages help to propagate the virtue of Bhakti and other spiritual fruits contained in the divine story of Lord Ram, and make them easily available to this world, in its farthest corner, just like the wind carries the fragrance of the sandalwood to distant places, far away from the physical location of the actual tree.}

Bhakti is the best fruit of all spiritual endeavours, and no one can get it (recognize this fruit amongst the cluster of so many assorted fruits) without the help of saints and sages. (Chaupai line nos. 17-18).

Realizing the importance of saints and other wise ones in the effort to attain the Gem of Bhakti, anyone who seeks them and establishes communion with them is easily able to acquire the Gem of Bhakti of Lord Ram (Chaupai line no. 19).

Brahm whose knowledge is contained in the Vedas is like a vast and fathomless ocean; the virtue of Gyan is like the Mandraachal Mountain; and the saints and wise ones are like the Gods. {This alludes to the legendary churning of the ocean by the Gods in search of Amrit, the nectar of eternity and bliss. At that time, they had used this mountain as the churning rod.} Anyone who churns this ocean and extracts the Amrit represented by Bhakti is able to partake it (just like the case of the Gods who drank the Amrit and became eternal and blissful). (Doha no. 120 Ka).

It is the Bhakti for Lord Hari (Vishnu) that protects the devotee with the help of the shield symbolized by the virtue of Vairagya, and kills his enemies represented by Mada, Lobha and Moha by using the sword of Gyan, to make him fearless. Oh Garud, think and ponder over this carefully." (Doha no. 120 Kha).]

भक्ति सुतंत्र सकल सुख खानी । बिनु सतसंग न पावहिं प्रानी ॥ ५ ॥

पुन्य पुंज बिनु मिलहिं न संता । सतसंगति संसृति कर अंता ॥ ६ ॥

bhakti sutantra sakala sukha khānī. binu satasaṅga na pāvahiṁ prānī. 5.
pun'ya punja binu milahiṁ na santā. satasaṅgati sansṛti kara antā. 6.

Bhakti is independent from all fetters; it does not depend upon any other factor to help the person who practices it to attain liberation and deliverance. In fact, Bhakti is a treasure-trove of all goodness and spiritual blessedness that gives the creature the best form of happiness and bliss.

But ‘Satsang’ (having communion with pious and holy people who have Bhakti in their hearts, who love the Lord God and find pleasure in serving the Lord and following a pious way of life) is essential to obtain Bhakti, and it is not possible otherwise¹. (5)

Saints are not accessible without the good affects arising out of leading an auspicious and righteous way of life. {If a man persistently indulges in evil thoughts and leading a corrupt way of life, his sub-conscious becomes accustomed to this vile environment. Just as a man used to eating spicy and fried food will have no taste for boiled rice or plain vegetables, a sinful man has no inclination to seek the company of saints and holy people. They will talk about a way of life that will not suit him.}

Company of saints and pious people, and establishing a communion with them, brings to an end all the spiritual miseries and torments from which the Jiva suffers². This company and communion eliminates the delusions pertaining to this world and helps the Jiva to break free from the endless cycle of birth and death in this mundane and mortal world. (6)

[Note—¹This is in consonance with the time tested adage that ‘one becomes like the company one keeps’. If a person is in constant contact with good, pious and holy people, it is natural that he would be influenced, even without any conscious effort on his part, by the lifestyle and thoughts of the latter. In due course of time, ‘Bhakti’ would come to that person naturally and on its own. He will see the positive effects of Bhakti on the person who practices it in life, and this would convince him better of its immense benefits which mere theoretical knowledge won’t do.

It is also like the case of a student learning a subject more thoroughly if he takes practical lessons under an expert teacher; mere books won’t help him.

²The glory of saints and the good affects of their company have been lauded and immensely extolled in Ram Charit Manas at a number of places as follows—(i) Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-7 that precede Doha no. 2; (ii) Baal Kand, Doha no. 3 and Chaupai line nos. 5-12 that precede it; (iii) Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 7; (iv) Uttar Kand, Chanda line nos. 13-16 that precedes Doha no. 14; (v) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precede Doha no. 37, to Doha no. 38; (vi) Doha no. 46 and its preceding Chaupai line nos. 2-8 that precedes Doha no. 46.

In Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 13 that precedes Doha no. 121, the saintly crow Kaagbhusund tells Garud (the mount of Lord Vishnu) that “there is no bigger or better source of happiness and joy than having company of saints and pious people”.

In Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 16, Lord Ram expressly tells Laxman that—“Bhakti is an entity that is most beautiful and magnificent; it is the root of all happiness and pleasures. It is obtained when saints are kind upon a person.”

In Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 35, Lord Ram stresses the importance of saints and their relationship with Bhakti when advises Sabari, while enumerating the nine forms of Bhakti to her, that—“Communion with saints and other pious people is the first form of Bhakti”.

In another of Tulsidas’ great spiritual books, known by the name of ‘Vairagya Sandipani’, the glories of saints have been expounded in verse nos. 8-33.]

पुन्य एक जग महँ नहिँ दूजा । मन क्रम बचन बिप्र पद पूजा ॥ ७ ॥
सानुकूल तेहि पर मुनि देवा । जो तजि कपटु करइ द्विज सेवा ॥ ८ ॥

pun'ya ēka jaga mahum' nahim dūjā. mana krama bacana bipra pada pūjā. 7.
sānukūla tēhi para muni dēvā. jō taji kapaṭu kara'i dvija sēvā. 8.

There is no other auspicious deed that is greater than worshipping the holy feet of Dwij (Brahmins) with one's mind, actions and words¹. (7)

Sages and Gods are pleased with those who serve Dwij (Brahmins) sincerely, without any wickedness, deceit and pretensions. (8)

[Note—¹As has been explained elsewhere, respect for a Brahmin is due to the fact that he is a learned man, well versed in the scriptures and wise enough to understand their teachings in the correct perspective. He is able implement these teachings in his own life, and therefore is the most competent Guru for the rest of the society. Of course, if a Brahmin does not live up to his expectations and cannot hold high the torch of Dharma, he is not worthy of any respect whatever. Lord Ram's words must be interpreted in the correct context.

In Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 46, Lord Ram tells sage Narad that “Bhakti includes having affection for and showing respect to the holy feet of one's Guru, the Lord God, and Vipra (Brahmins)”.

In Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 46, Lord Ram tells sage Narad that “Bhakti includes having affection for and showing respect to the holy feet of one's Guru, the Lord God, and Vipra (Brahmins)”.

In Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 11-14 that precede Doha no. 109, Lord Shiva declares—“Service to Brahmins is the way to please the Lord God. Always treat ‘Sants’ (meaning literally ‘saints’, but here implying ‘saintly, holy and pious Brahmins’) as being equivalent to ‘Anant’ (the infinite and eternal Lord God; the Supreme Being; Lord Vishnu; the Viraat Purush). Even if a person escapes the wrath of Indra's fierce weapon known as Vajra, of my (Shiva's) trident, of the baton of Kaal (the God of death) and Lord Vishnu's invincible Chakra (serrated discus)—verily I say that such a person cannot escape being burnt to ashes by the fierce wrath (curse) of Brahmins.”

In Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 105, sage Kaagbhusund tells Garud that the Dwij “was merciful, had a good nature, and was a virtual treasury of righteous principles”.]

दो०. औरउ एक गुपुत मत सबहि कहउँ कर जोरि।

संकर भजन बिना नर भगति न पावइ मोरि ॥ ४५ ॥

dōhā.

aura'u ēka guputa mata sabahi kaha'um' kara jōri.
saṅkara bhajana binā nara bhagati na pāva'i mōri. 45.

There is one more secret I must tell you all with all the humility I can gather. Without adoring Lord Shiva, invoking his holy name and worshipping him earnestly, one cannot have (or expect success in having) devotion for me. (Doha no. 45)

[Note—In Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, there are specific verses that reiterate this declaration of Lord Ram—(i) Doha no. 2; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede this Doha no. 2

This is an important caveat included by the Lord. Earlier also, in Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 2—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 3, Lord Ram has asserted that he himself has the greatest respect for Lord Shiva, that if a man hopes to have devotion for the Lord (Ram) without worshipping Lord Shiva first then he goes to hell and is a complete dud, and that anyone who says that he is dear to Lord Shiva and inimical to me (Lord Ram) and vice versa then such a person goes to fall in a fierce heaven to suffer for one Kalpa (a very long period of time, equivalent to 1 day of Brahma the creator, which are equal to 432×10^7 earthly years approximately).

The context of this assertion was Lord Ram's consecration of Lord Shiva's Lingam (symbolic idol) on the shores of the ocean and worshipping Shiva before Lord Ram embarked on his mission to defeat and eliminate the cruel demons from Lanka. He decided to invoke Lord Shiva's blessings for this great enterprise.

Lord Shiva is no ordinary God; he is known as 'Mahadeva'—the great Lord God. He is also known as 'Ishan' or the symbol of Isha, the Supreme Being. He is a personified form of bliss and renunciation that comes with self-realisation, enlightenment and a constant state of Samadhi (a trance-like of transcendental existence) attained in higher reaches of meditation and contemplation. He is an embodiment of Truth and its beauty.

This exceptional adoration for Lord Shiva in the heart of Lord Ram is not unilateral, for Shiva also enshrines Lord Ram in his heart, and constantly repeats Lord Ram's holy Name, known as the 'Tarka Mantra', a spiritual formula that provides deliverance to the creature's soul from the cycle of transmigration.

These facts have been expressly and clearly mentioned in Ram Charit Manas at the following places in Baal Kand—

(i) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 52 where Lord Shiva tells his divine consort Parvati or Uma that "Raghubir (Lord Ram) is my sole revered deity; I adore him as my Lord God; Lord Ram is the one who is constantly served by wise and enlightened sages and seers".

(ii) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 19 where it is asserted that "Lord Shiva constantly repeats (does Japa) the great Mantra of Lord Ram, and uses this mystically empowered divine formula to provide Mukti (liberation and deliverance) to the dying creature at Kasi (the pilgrim city of Varanasi, which is famous as the site for cremation of the dead so that their souls find liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death".

(iii) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 19 where it is asserted that “Lord Shiva knows the immense importance of Lord Ram’s holy name because it is on the strength of its life-giving and life-sustaining powers, and its ability to neutralize all the evil affects of poisons, both physical as well as symbolic, that he managed to gulp the horrible poison, known as the ‘Kaal Kut’, that emerged from the celestial ocean at the time of its churning in search of Amrit, the ambrosia of eternity, by the gods and the demons in some ancient time”.

(iv) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 26 where it is declared that “It is as a divine blessing of Lord Ram’s holy name that Lord Shiva is regarded as a fount and treasury of all auspiciousness and holiness inspite of his body being adorned and surrounded by unholy things (such as being covered by ash, being wrapped by coiled serpents, remaining almost naked like an ascetic, and living in the cremation ground to do meditation and provide Mukti to dying creatures).

(v) Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 35 where it is said that “the divine story of Lord Ram, known as the ‘Ram Charit Manas’, was first revealed in the heart of Lord Shiva”.

(vi) Chaupai line no. 36 that precedes Doha no. 1 where Tulsidas assert that “the Ram Charit Manas emerged in his own heart as a blessing of Lord Shiva”.

(vii) Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 50 where it is narrated how Uma, the divine consort of Shiva, was extremely perplexed when she saw that Lord Shiva had reverentially bowed his head before Lord Ram though Shiva himself is so exalted and a senior God in creation that the entire world bows its head before him.

In another great legendary narration of Lord Ram’s divine story, the famous ‘Adhyatma Ramayan’ by sage Veda Vyas, the legendary classifier of the Vedas and the author of the Purans, it is stated that after being crowned as the king of Ayodhya, Lord Ram had established countless numbers of Shiva Lingams in his kingdom—apropos: Adhyatma Ramayan, Uttar Kand, Canto 4, verse nos. 27.]

चौ०. कहहु भगति पथ कवन प्रयासा । जोग न मख जप तप उपवासा ॥ १ ॥

सरल सुभाव न मन कुटिलाई । जथा लाभ संतोष सदाई ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

kahahu bhagati patha kavana prayāsā. jōga na makha japa tapa upavāsā. 1.
sarala subhāva na mana kuṭilāī. jathā lābha santōṣa sadāī. 2.

Say, what effort is needed to walk on the path of Bhakti, as one need not do Yoga (meditation), Makha (or fire sacrifices; other religious duties and observances), Japa (constant repetition of any holy Mantra or spiritual formula), Tapa (austerity, penance and enduring hardships) or Upavaas (abstinence from food and drink; fasting).

[To wit, the path of Bhakti is extremely easy and simple. It does not require any special effort or incur any encumbrances on the way. It simply needs love, dedication, faith, submission, commitment and devotion for the Lord God. It is as easy as a child loving its mother. No formalities and decorum are needed.] (1)

{Now, Lord Ram outlines the basic qualities that one must have to develop Bhakti in his heart, and be successful in its implementation. These are general good qualities a person must have in his life, whether he wishes to have Bhakti or not, as even a cursory reading of these virtues would show that they help the person become a good

human being instead of some pervert and evil creature who is no better than an animal.}

Such persons who have Bhakti must have a simple and unpretentious nature which is free from cunning, wickedness, perversions, falsehood, deceit and conceit. They are always contented with whatever they have, not greedying or yearning for more. Hence, they are always satisfied and happy. (2)

मोर दास कहाइ नर आसा । करइ तौ कहहु कहा बिस्वासा ॥ ३ ॥
बहुत कहउँ का कथा बढ़ाई । एहि आचरन बस्य मैं भाई ॥ ४ ॥

mōra dāsa kahā'i nara āsā. kara'i tau kahahu kahā bisvāsā. 3.
bahuta kaha'um' kā kathā barhā'ī. ēhi ācarana basya mair' bhā'ī. 4.

Say, if one claims to be, on the one hand, my (Lord Ram's) devotee and says that he is dedicated to me, depends upon me, and has no one else as his Lord, but on the other hand expects something from others, or depends upon others—then how can he so claim that he is my true follower, is truly dedicated to me, has true devotion and faith in me and has submitted himself to me in the true sense?

[To wit, a true devotee of the Lord is one who does speak lie, and is completely trustworthy in all actions and words. He must be fully dedicated to the Supreme Lord, and depend upon the Lord as his sole protector and benefactor.] (3)

What more can I (Lord Ram, the incarnate Supreme Being) say; I am committed to love and protect those who have the grand eclectic virtues enumerated above. (4)

बैर न बिग्रह आस न त्रासा । सुखमय ताहि सदा सब आसा ॥ ५ ॥
अनारंभ अनिकेत अमानी । अनघ अरोष दच्छ बिग्यानी ॥ ६ ॥

baira na bigraha āsa na trāsā. sukhamaya tāhi sadā saba āsā. 5.
anārambha anikēta amānī. anagha arōṣa daccha bigyānī. 6.

Such a person must not be inimical to anyone or harbour ill-will and malice towards any person in this world. He should not fight or quarrel with anyone, nor create animosity and hatred. He should not expect anything from anyone, nor should he fear them.

[Since he expects nothing from anyone, hates no one, and has no enemy in this world, it is obvious that he has nothing to fear from anybody. Since he wants nothing, there is no sense of frustration at not having been able to acquire anything, or that someone is preventing him from acquiring it, a situation that leads to jealousy and ill-will.]

For such a dispassionate, detached, enlightened and wise saint, all the directions (i.e. all the corners of the world) are equal and comfortable; they all provide him happiness and joy as he has neither any fear from any quarter nor is he jealous of

the prosperity and wealth of others that may cause some degree of inferiority complex or a sense of dearth and want in him. (5)

He does not start doing any deed with an expectation of a reward or favourable result, and hence does it with total detachment with the idea that it is his destiny that has presented itself before him in the form of the situation requiring him to do what he is doing. [And wise and enlightened as he is, he submits all the consequences of his deeds, good or bad, to the Lord God, becoming free from any mental involvement and attendant worries.]

He has no home of his own. [Here, the reference is to the gross body which all living beings regard as their own truthful self, as well as the gross world which all living beings regard as their habitat. The secret idea is that a true saint and holy person is he who has become enlightened of the great spiritual fact that the true 'self' is the Atma, the pure cosmic Consciousness that is an ethereal, subtle and sublime entity which has no fixed abode because it is all-pervading and omnipresent in this world as the Holy Spirit. This Atma or Soul is distinct from the gross body, and since the Atma is the person's 'truthful self', he does not regard the body as his identity. Again, such a self-realised person understands that the outside world is transient and delusory, it is a creation of the mind, and it is entrapping and shackling by nature like quicksand or quagmire which sucks anyone in if one puts a leg into it even inadvertently. How can the cosmic Atma for which the whole creation is a habitat, which is all-pervading, all-encompassing, omnipresent, immanent and ethereal by nature limit itself to a gross body or the gross brick-and-mortar house that ignorant people call a 'home'?)]

He has no attachment or attractions for anything or anyone; he is not infatuated with them. He is immaculate and sinless. He has no anger and wrathfulness in him. He is an expert in the laws of proper conduct and well-versed in the knowledge of the Truth. He is wise, realised and enlightened. (6)

प्रीति सदा सज्जन संसर्गा । तृण सम बिषय स्वर्ग अपबर्गा ॥ ७ ॥
भगति पच्छ हठ नहिं सठताई । दुष्ट तर्क सब दूरि बहाई ॥ ८ ॥

prīti sadā sajjana sansargā. tṛṇa sama biṣaya svarga apabargā. 7.
bhagati paccha haṭha nahim saṭhatā'ī. duṣṭa tarka saba dūri bahā'ī. 8.

He (my devotee) finds pleasure and happiness in the company of saints, of holy and pious people. He treats all things of the material world of sense objects as being worthless as a reed or grass. For him, the heaven and the world are equal.

[This is primarily because he has realised that the ultimate spiritual truth in this creation is known as the Atma. This Atma is a cosmic ethereal entity known as Consciousness that resides in his own bosom and no where else, that it is this Atma residing in his own self which is also called the Holy Spirit, the Parmatma, the Supreme Being, whom the world calls the Lord God, and that there is no such thing as a separate heaven somewhere in the sky where he will go after death to enjoy some great privileges and physical comfort, or a distinct place called the world where he has to suffer while he lives in it. He realises that all suffering is his own creation; it is his mind that feels that this is causing pain and that is causing happiness. The heaven

above is as illusionary as the world under it. The reality is that when the Atma wants to find freedom from all fetters, it can do so instantly by becoming detached from everything. When the body is shed, the Atma is physically liberated from its four walls. Freedom from bondages of spiritual ignorance and delusions is the actual symbolic form of Mukti, or liberation and deliverance, which gives immense happiness, joy, bliss and tranquility to the creature—a situation that is equated to being in heaven. The opposite situation would then obviously create unhappiness and misery. This is equivalent to suffering in this world.] (7)

Saints prefer to follow the path of Bhakti—having love, devotion, dedication, faith and trust for the Lord God. He keeps a great distance from those who are wicked, evil and pervert, as well as from aimless debates and useless logics that make no sense and are a waste of time and energy. (8)

दो०. मम गुन ग्राम नाम रत गत ममता मद मोह ।
ता कर सुख सोइ जानइ परानंद संदोह ॥ ४६ ॥

dōhā.

mama guna grāma nāma rata gata mamatā mada mōha.
tā kara sukha sō'i jāna'i parānanda sandōha. 46.

Only those who remain submerged in the nectar representing my countless virtues and the spiritual ambrosia of my holy name (i.e. always remember them and repeats my divine name), and are free from the entanglements of Mamta (worldly attachments and affections), the tainting effects of Mada (arrogance, haughtiness, hypocrisy, pride of being superior to others, ego), and the fetters of Moha (worldly attractions and infatuations)—verily, such saints know and are able to taste the divine nectar of bliss and happiness of the highest order (that comes naturally with practicing of the above eclectic virtues).” (Doha no. 46).

[Note—The glories of Lord Ram’s holy and divine name have been elaborately narrated in nearly all the magnificent devotional books on the theme of Lord Ram written by Goswami Tulsidas. A summary is as follows—

- (i) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Doha no. 19 and its preceding Chaupai line no. 1, right upto Doha no. 27.
- (ii) Dohawali, verse nos. 1-47, 57-63, 80-81, 95-100, 102-116, 126-140, 150-152, 187.
- (iii) Barvai Ramayan, verse nos. 45-69.
- (iv) Kavitawali, Uttar Kand, verse nos. 1-125.
- (v) Geetawali, Sundar Kand, verse nos. 40, 42, 44-46.
- (vi) Vinai Patrika, verse nos. 4356, 65-70.]

चौ०. सुनत सुधासम बचन राम के । गहे सबनि पद कृपाधाम के ॥ १ ॥
जननि जनक गुर बंधु हमारे । कृपा निधान प्रान ते प्यारे ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

sunata sudhāsama bacana rāma kē. gahē sabani pada kṛpādhāma kē. 1.
janani janaka gura bandhu hamārē. kṛpā nidhāna prāna tē pyārē. 2.

When the assembled citizens heard these nectar-like divine words from Lord Ram that were meant for their spiritual welfare and happiness, all of them were overwhelmed with gratitude towards the Lord (for teaching them the path of spiritualism that is easy to follow, as well as right and correct); they all fell down to prostrate before the Lord and caught hold of his august feet¹. (1)

The citizens expressed their joy and thankfulness to the gracious Lord Ram by declaring unanimously: ‘The merciful Lord is like our mother, father, guru and friend. He is dearer to us than our own lives. No one is dearer to us than our beloved Lord Ram who takes great care of our spiritual well-being along with our worldly welfare. (2)

[Note—¹The citizens were overwhelmed by the Lord’s unpretentious and friendly nature, and his genuine concern for their good and well-being. They were thankful to the Lord for being alert and concerned about their spiritual welfare. They paid their respects and tributes to him for the deep and insightful knowledge of the essence of the scriptures that he possessed. And they showed their willingness to follow the Lord’s advice by bowing before him and clasping his feet as a gesture of acceptance of his instructions.

In Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 336 it is said that “Lord Ram fulfills all desires, is the most exalted amongst the learned, and is pleased by one’s sincerity and honest submissions”.

The assembled citizenry was so happy at their good fortune that they had such a caring and merciful king who was not instructing them on worldly matters of state policy to meet his political goals or to follow the edicts and laws of the kingdom mandated by their ruler, but on subjects of their spiritual welfare that would have a direct bearing on their destiny and future happiness whether or not they remain in his kingdom or migrate somewhere else.

All classes of citizens of all ages were present in this meeting. The Lord had used the universal form of address for all of them by calling them ‘Bhai’ or brother (refer: Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 43 above). Each individual had a different level of relationship with the Lord—some treated him as their Lord, some as friend, others as their de-facto parent, still others as their Guru, and so on. This is why the Lord used the equalizing term of ‘brother’ for them. In Lord Ram’s eyes, all of them were equal if they loved him, had devotion for him and were determined to follow the path shown by him; all such people are very dear to the Lord—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 130. This fact is clearly declared by the people themselves below in the next line no. 2.

Therefore, all of them showed their combined respect to him and vowed their allegiance to the Lord by bowing and clasping his holy feet in a gesture to reiterate their faith in him and obedience to him.]

तनु धनु धाम राम हितकारी । सब बिधि तुम्ह प्रनतारति हारी ॥ ३ ॥

असि सिख तुम्ह बिनु देइ न कोऊ । मातु पिता स्वारथ रत ओऊ ॥ ४ ॥

tanu dhanu dhāma rāma hitakārī. saba bidhi tumha pranatārati hārī. 3.
asi sikha tumha binu dē'i na kō'ū. mātu pitā svāratha rata ō'ū. 4.

Oh Lord Ram who eliminates the miseries, grief and torments of those who have taken refuge with you ('pranatārati hārī'). For us, you are everything in this world; you are our body, wealth and home. In other words, you are very precious for us; we value you like we value our possessions such as our bodies, our wealth and our homesteads*.

[*There is another way of interpreting this verse. It can read as follows—"Oh Lord Ram. You are our well-wisher; you take care of us and ensure our spiritual welfare like we ensure the safety of our own worldly possessions such as our bodies, our wealth and our homes. Indeed Lord, you are the one who eliminates all the worries and fears of those who come to take your refuge."]¹ (3)

No one will give us such a wise and selfless spiritual advice (that is for our welfare), except you. Even our parents, the mother and the father, are selfish as all have some sort of personal interest vested in us². (4)

[Note—¹The fact that Lord Ram is a selfless helper and provider of care and welfare to all in this world is emphasized in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 47 herein below.

²The parents are interested in their off-spring because he or she would take care of them in their old age and carry forward their family line. If the son does not live up to his expectations, the father often disinherits him. No father will advise his son to become a monk and renounce everything worldly. He will instead want that his son earn a livelihood and carry on with his family business, profession or vocation.

This fact that even the parents are selfish is reiterated elsewhere in Ram Charit Manas, in Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 99 which says "the mother and the father call their children and teach them such things by which they learn to fill their stomachs (i.e. they teach them the method to earn a livelihood)".

This idea is further stressed in the following line no. 6 below (i.e. 7/47/6).

Vinai Patrika, one of the most magnificent book of prayers ever written, has this idea expressed in its verse nos. 199 and 243 that all relationships in this world revolve around fulfillment of selfish interests, and it is only Lord Ram who helps others and thinks for their long-term good and well-being selflessly.

But Lord Ram has not uttered a single word relating to worldly affairs during his discourse here. He is only concerned about the spiritual welfare and good destiny of the people.]

हेतु रहित जग जुग उपकारी । तुम्ह तुम्हार सेवक असुरारी ॥ ५ ॥

स्वारथ मीत सकल जग माहीं । सपनेहुँ प्रभु परमारथ नाहीं ॥ ६ ॥

hētu rahita jaga juga upakārī. tumha tumhāra sēvaka asurārī. 5.
svāratha mīta sakala jaga māhīm. sapanēhum' prabhu paramāratha nāhīm. 6.

Oh Lord who eliminates the demons¹! You are a selfless provider of good to the whole world in all planes of time; you take care of the welfare and well-being of the entire creation in a selfless way at all times².

For your devotees and followers who diligently serve you (i.e. worship you, are devoted and dedicated to you, and who have no one other than you in this world), you are like the Lord who slays the demons. (5)

Everyone is driven or motivated by some or the other kind of selfishness or self-interest. Everyone is a friend or interested in anybody because of some kind of self-interest involved in this relationship of friendship. [Self-interest is an overriding factor that governs all deeds, actions, relationships, interactions, behaviour, thoughts and dealings in this world.]

No one is concerned about the spiritual welfare, well-being and good of the other person; no one is bothered about the destiny of others except how it affects his own interests.³ (6)

[Note—¹Here, the word ‘demon’ has subtle nuances—it refers to the evil nature and sinful tendencies, the inauspicious qualities and negative traits that live inside the bosom of a creature. These unholy factors act as taints on the otherwise holy and immaculate nature of the Atma of the creature. The merciful Lord strives to remove the many evil qualities that a creature harbours inside him which act as impediments for his spiritual welfare. The Atma becomes a virtual slave to the countless negative qualities present in a creature. Elimination of all the vices and sinful characters of a creature is tantamount to slaying the demons inside him as they all make the creature behave and think like a demon. This helps the Atma of the creature to find its freedom from their shackling effects, leading to its liberation and deliverance. By the removal of these negative and inauspicious qualities from a creature, the Lord ensures that he attains happiness and peace which had eluded him so far. The slaying of the demons or eliminating them is a metaphoric way of saying all this.

The countless negative traits present in a living being, the Jiva, are metaphorically regarded as demons because like the demon who finds pleasure in tormenting this world they too derive satisfaction in causing immense suffering for the concerned Jiva as well as for those who come in contact with such a Jiva.

Tulsidas’ ‘Vinai Patrika’ has a magnificent verse no. 58 in which this metaphor of the demon is used to represent so many evil qualities present in a person. It says that such negatives as Kaam (passions; lust), Krodha (anger), Mada (arrogance), Lobha (greed), Moha (attachments), Maya (delusions), Ahankar (pride, vanity) etc. are like the many demons such as Meghnaad who were killed by Lord Ram during the epic war at Lanka.

²This fact that Lord Ram is a selfless provider of good and welfare to all in this world is reiterated elsewhere also in Ram Charit Manas. For instance, in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 46 it is said that “he always endeavours for the welfare and good of others without having any sort of selfish interest or motivation in it”.

³In other words, the citizens tell Lord Ram that it is only the Lord who talks about the security and good of their spiritual destiny, about the welfare of their Atma. All the rest of the world, even their own parents, their Gurus and their friends who are supposed to be very close to them and are expected to act in a way that is best for

them, are not interested in spiritual welfare, for all of them have their own axes to grind.

As long as their self-interests are served and desires fulfilled, as long as the Jiva is able to serve them and help them succeed in their own plan of things, these parents, Gurus or friends treat the Jiva nicely. But as soon as the Jiva begins to think independently for his own welfare and chalk out a plan to reach the goal in life that he sets for himself that clashes with that of the others, the same persons become inimical to him.]

सब के बचन प्रेम रस साने । सुनि रघुनाथ हृदयँ हरषाने ॥ ७ ॥

निज निज गृह गए आयसु पाई । बरनत प्रभु बतकही सुहाई ॥ ८ ॥

saba kē bacana prēma rasa sānē. suni raghunātha hr̥dayam̐ haraṣānē. 7.
nija nija gr̥ha ga'e āyasu pā'ī. baranata prabhu batakahī suhā'ī. 8.

Lord Ram (Raghnath) became very pleased in his heart when he heard these words of affection from all those citizens assembled there¹. (7)

After that, all the people took the Lord's permission and went their way to their respective homes, praising the pleasant and sweet words of the Lord and discussing them amongst themselves on the way. (8)

[Note—¹Lord Ram felt glad that the people have understood him properly and in the correct perspective. Earlier, in Chaupai line no. 4 that preceded Doha no. 43 the Lord had politely told the assembly, at the beginning of the discourse, that if they do not agree with him they are free to do what they think; he is not imposing his will on them. Then once again, in line no. 6 he said that if they think he is wrong then they should not fear him and frankly tell him about their reservations.

Now when the Lord saw that all the people agreed with him, it is natural for him to feel pleased. His aim was to show the citizens the correct spiritual path and to teach them on principles of Dharma, and now that they have agreed to follow his instructions and praised the Lord for telling them many things they weren't aware of, expressing their gratitude to the Lord for it, it is natural that the Lord will feel happy and satisfied.]

दो०. उमा अवधबासी नर नारि कृतारथ रूप ।

ब्रह्म सच्चिदानंद घन रघुनायक जहँ भूप ॥ ४७ ॥

dōhā.

umā avadhabāsī nara nāri kṛtāratha rūpa.
brahma saccidānanda ghaṇa raghunāyaka jaham̐ bhūpa. 47.

Lord Shiva (who was the primary narrator of the holy Story of Lord Ram) told his consort goddess Uma: 'Oh Uma! The residents of Ayodhya, both the males and the females, were extremely fortunate and blessed, for Lord Ram, the exalted King in the illustrious family of the ancient king Raghu, who was none else but Brahm himself

personified, and was an embodiment of truth, pure consciousness and the bliss that accompanies these two glorious virtues, was the ruler of that place (i.e. of the kingdom of Ayodhya).¹ (Doha no. 47)

[Note—¹Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, (i) Doha no. 297; (b) Uttar Kand, (ii) Doha nos. 26 and 29; (iii) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 48.]

चौ०. एक बार बसिष्ठ मुनि आए । जहाँ राम सुखधाम सुहाए ॥ १ ॥
अति आदर रघुनायक कीन्हा । पद पखारि पादोदक लीन्हा ॥ २ ॥
caupāī.

ēka bāra basiṣṭha muni ā'ē. jahām' rāma sukhadhāma suhā'ē. 1.
ati ādara raghunāyaka kīnhā. pada pakhāri pādōdaka līnhā. 2.

Once, sage Vasistha came (ā'ē) to the palace where Lord Ram, who had a charming personality, and was a personified form of the pleasant virtues of bliss, beatitude and joy, was present. (1)

Lord Ram, the Lord of the illustrious family of king Raghu (raghunāyaka), welcomed the sage most reverentially by washing the latter's feet, and then sipping that water as a sanctified liquid¹. (2)

[Note—¹Earlier, when sage Vasistha had visited Lord Ram in his palace to inform him that king Dasrath has decided to anoint him as the Regent of the kingdom, the Lord had welcomed the sage very warmly in almost a similar manner—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 9.]

राम सुनहु मुनि कह कर जोरी । कृपासिंधु बिनती कछु मोरी ॥ ३ ॥
देखि देखि आचरन तुम्हारा । होत मोह मम हृदयँ अपारा ॥ ४ ॥

rāma sunahu muni kaha kara jōrī. kṛpāsindhu binatī kachu mōrī. 3.
dēkhi dēkhi ācarana tumhārā. hōta mōha mama hṛdayam' apārā. 4.

Sage Vasistha joined the palms of his hands in a prayerful mode and said to Lord Ram: 'Oh Ram, who is an ocean of grace, compassion, benevolence and kindness (kṛpāsindhu), please listen to a little prayer of mine. (3)

The more I see your worldly acts, the more I get deluded and the more my heart appears to be confused about your reality and divine nature.

[This is because you act like an ordinary human being, though I am fully aware that you are the Supreme Being who has come to this world with a divine purpose and on the specific request of the gods, mother earth and the great sages who asked you to deliver them from the scourge of the cruel demons. Besides this, my father, the creator Brahma, had also advised me that you are the Supreme Being, and I will be most fortunate and blessed if I serve you by becoming a priest of the kingdom where you will be a king.]¹ (4)

[Note—¹Sage Vasistha was not the only one to get confused about the real identity of Lord Ram by seeing the Lord's perfect play as a human being. Others who got deluded and confused in a similar manner were goddess Sati, the consort of Lord Shiva*1, and Garud, the celestial mount of Lord Vishnu*2.

{Refer: Ram Charit Manas, *1 = (a) Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 50—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 56; (ii) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 108—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 111; (b) Uttar Kand, (iii) Doha no. 129 along with Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede it.

*2 = Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 58—to Doha no. 62; (ii) Doha no. 68—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 69.]

महिमा अमिति बेद नहिं जाना । मैं केहि भाँति कहउँ भगवाना ॥ ५ ॥

उपरोहित्य कर्म अति मंदा । बेद पुरान सुमृति कर निंदा ॥ ६ ॥

mahimā amiti bēda nahim jānā. mair̥m kēhi bhām̐ti kaha'um̐ bhagavānā. 5.
uparōhitya karma ati mandā. bēda purāna sumṛti kara nindā. 6.

Oh gracious and revered Lord (bhagavānā)! There is neither any limit nor any measurement of your glories, holiness and divinity, for they are infinite and beyond comprehension. Even the Vedas (ancient scriptures) fail to comprehensively know you and describe your glories, then say how is it possible for me to know and fathom them? (5)

The profession (or the job) of priesthood is contemptible, and one of the most lowly of all engagements (ati mandā). The Vedas, the Purans and other scriptures condemn it as a vocation (kara nindā).

जब न लेउँ मैं तब बिधि मोही । कहा लाभ आगें सुत तोही ॥ ७ ॥

परमातमा ब्रह्म नर रूपा । होइहि रघुकुल भूषन भूपा ॥ ८ ॥

jaba na lē'um̐ mair̥m taba bidhi mōhī. kahā lābha āgēm̐ suta tōhī. 7.
paramātamā brahma nara rūpā. hō'ihī raghukula bhūṣana bhūpā. 8.

When I was reluctant to accept the post of a priest of Ayodhya, my father, the creator Brahma, told me: “My dear son, you shall have great rewards and feel blessed by accepting this job (so please don't hesitate). (7)

It is because the Parmatma, also known as Brahm, the Supreme Being and the Lord of the world, would manifest himself in a human form to become a great king who would be like a jewel in the illustrious race of kings descending from king Raghu who ruled the kingdom of Ayodhya.

[This being the case, you shall have the opportunity to serve and interact with the Lord at a very close and personal level, which would be feat unparalleled in history. So therefore, don't miss this golden chance. If you weigh the benefits against

the drawbacks of the job of priesthood, you shall discover that the positive rewards would outmatch the negatives by a thousand counts.]” (8)

दो०. तब मैं हृदयँ बिचारा जोग जग्य ब्रत दान ।
जा कहूँ करिअ सो पैहउँ धर्म न एहि सम आन ॥ ४८ ॥

dōhā.

taba maiṁ hr̥dayam̐ bicārā jōga jagya brata dāna.
jā kahum̐ kari'a sō paiha'um̐ dharma na ēhi sama āna. 48.

Sage Vasistha continued: ‘Hearing Brahma’s advice, I thought the matter over in my heart and came to the conclusion that of all the positive rewards that one gets by pursuing so many religious and spiritual paths such as Yoga (meditation), Yagya (religious sacrifices), Vrat (keeping vows), Daan (making charities and giving alms) and the like, whatever positive consequences are due to a person who follows all such noble paths, none can match the spiritual rewards and the feeling of blessedness that one gets by being able to serve the Supreme Being at a personal level.

Verily indeed and in all sooth, my conscience told me that there is no better Dharma (moral duty and righteous way of offering one’s service to the Supreme Being) than being able to serve the Lord personally, the chance that I was being offered, and I would only prove myself to be a big fool if I miss it.’ (Doha no. 48)

चौ०. जप तप नियम जोग निज धर्मा । श्रुति संभव नाना सुभ कर्मा ॥ १ ॥
ग्यान दया दम तीरथ मज्जन । जहँ लागि धर्म कहत श्रुति सज्जन ॥ २ ॥
आगम निगम पुरान अनेका । पढ़े सुने कर फल प्रभु एका ॥ ३ ॥
तव पद पंकज प्रीति निरंतर । सब साधन कर यह फल सुंदर ॥ ४ ॥

caupāī.

japa tapa niyama jōga nija dharmā. śruti sambhava nānā subha karmā. 1.
gyāna dayā dama tīratha majjana. jaham̐ lagi dharma kahata śruti sajjana. 2.
āgama nigama purāna anēkā. parhē sunē kara phala prabhu ēkā. 3.
tava pada paṅkaja prīti nirantara. saba sādhana kara yaha phala sundara. 4.

Sage Vasistha further said: ‘All possible sorts of auspicious deeds as mentioned in the Vedas, such as Japa (repetition of holy Mantras or divine formulas dedicated to Lord God), Tapa (austerities and penances), Niyam (observing strict codes of a religious way of life), Yoga (meditation and contemplation), and diligently doing one’s assigned duties in a righteous and auspicious way, --- (1)

--- Gyan (acquisition of true knowledge of the scriptures), Daya (mercy), Dama (practicing self-restraint over one’s sense organs and natural urges), Tirath (pilgrimage to holy places), Majjan (cleansing of the body, as well as the mind and the soul by pursuing a holy and religious way of life) and all other paths of Dharma (a righteous and auspicious way of life) that has been described and lauded by wise persons, --- (2)

--- As well as the good rewards of studying and hearing (reading and understanding) the different Aagams and Nigams¹, the Purans and other holy scriptures—oh Lord (prabhu), the best and the only reward of all such auspicious activities and noble pursuits in life --- (4)

--- Is to have steady, robust and sincere affection for your holy feet. Verily indeed, in all sooth and without gainsay, this is the most beautiful and the best fruit that one can expect to be blessed with by following all the above paths, individually or collectively. (4)

[Note—¹The āgama and the nigama:

(a) Aagam: These are ancient sacred books that teach the Truth in all its aspects. The word usually applies to the scriptures known as the Vedas. The Aagam is typically divided into four parts, known as the ‘Padas’ (pronounced as Pādas) as follows: (i) The Gyan Pada or Vidya Pada, where deep metaphysical and philosophical concepts are elucidated; (ii) The Yoga Pada, where Yoga or meditation and its practice is discussed to purify the mind and the body; (iii) The Kriya Pada, which details physical diagrams, postures and structural forms to be used in meditation as well as in temple construction and making of icons that represent the deity to be offered worship through meditation; and (iv) The Charayaa Pada, which are expositions on sacraments and codes of conduct to be followed by a spiritual aspirant.

So, the word ‘Aagam’ refers to the Tantra Sastras which deal with esoteric knowledge and forms of worship of the Supreme Being in his various forms, such as the three chief deities known as Shiva, Vishnu and Shakti, and it relies on occult practices using special Mantras that are specific to a particular deity.

Thus, in accordance to the deity to be worshipped, the Aagams are divided into three chief categories, viz. Shiva-aagams, Vishnu-aagams, and Shakti-aagams that are dedicated respectively to Lord Shiva who is the concluder of creation and the third God of the Trinity, Lord Vishnu who is the caretaker and protector of creation and the second God of the Trinity, and Shakti which is the personified form of cosmic dynamic power and energy of the Supreme Being that is employed to regulate the various functions of creation.

Amongst these three categories of Aagams based on the deity they are dedicated to, the ones pertaining to the Shakti are called ‘Tantra Shastras’, because they employ occult practices and esoteric formulas for worship purposes.

Meanwhile, the Vishnu-aagams are called ‘Samhitas’, and they prescribe that Lord Vishnu is the Supreme Being himself; and the Shiva-aagams are twenty-eight in number and stress that Lord Shiva is the Param Pati and the Param Purush, the Supreme Father and the Supreme Male of creation.

(b) Nigam: This word is used to mean the Vedas, the primary sacred scriptures. The word means ‘that through which the Absolute Truth is known or ascertained clearly’. In this sense, the art of logically explaining anything, as is the practice followed in the exposition of the Upanishads, is called a Nigam.

There are four primary Vedas, viz. the Rig, Saam, Yajur and Atharva. The Yajur Veda has two sub-categories, viz. the Shukla Yajur Veda and the Krishna Yajur Vedas. The metaphysical and spiritual Truth contained in these primary scriptures are expounded in the form of treatises called the Upanishads, also known as Vedanta, of

which there are one hundred and eight in numbers—Rig Veda has ten Upanishads; Saam Veda has sixteen Upanishads; Krishna Yajur Veda has thirty-two Upanishads; Shukla Yajur Veda has nineteen Upanishads; and Atharva Veda has thirty-one Upanishads.

Further, the Vedas have many sub-vedas, known as the ‘Up-vedas’. The Rig Veda has the sub-veda known as ‘Ayurveda’ dealing with medicinal herbs; the Sama Veda has ‘Gandharvaveda’ dealing with the art of song and dance; the Yajur Veda has ‘Dhanurveda’ that deals with archery and the science of weapon and warfare; and Atharva Veda has ‘Artha shastra’ that deals with political science, governance and economy.]

छूटइ मल कि मलहि के धोएँ । घृत कि पाव कोइ बारि बिलोएँ ॥ ५ ॥
प्रेम भगति जल बिनु रघुराई । अभिअंतर मल कबहुँ न जाई ॥ ६ ॥

chūṭa'i mala ki malahi kē dhō'ēm̐. ghr̥ta ki pāva kō'i bāri bilō'ēm̐. 5.
prēma bhagati jala binu raghurā'ī. abhi'antara mala kabahum̐ na jā'ī. 6.

Can anyone clean a dirty surface by using dirty water?

Similarly, can anyone get clarified butter (known as ghee) by churning water? [Clarified butter is obtained by vigourously churning pure milk, and never from water.] (5)

In the same way oh Lord Ram, the Lord of the Raghus (raghurā'ī), without the water symbolised by the virtues of love and affection as well as devotion for you, it is never possible to cleanse the impurities and taints that mar the purity and holiness of one's inner-self (i.e. one's Atma, one's soul, which is pure consciousness)¹. (6)

[Note—¹In this context, refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 122.]

सोइ सर्बग्य तग्य सोइ पंडित । सोइ गुन गृह बिग्यान अखंडित ॥ ७ ॥
दच्छ सकल लच्छन जुत सोई । जाकें पद सरोज रति होई ॥ ८ ॥

sō'i sarbagya tagya sō'i paṇḍita. sō'i guna gr̥ha bigyāna akhaṇḍita. 7.
daccha sakala lacchana juta sō'ī. jākēm̐ pada sarōja rati hō'ī. 8.

A person is considered to be the most sagacious, erudite, wise, learned and enlightened, as well as a treasury trove of all knowledge and wisdom, and most intelligent and prudent if that person has true and sincere affection for your (Lord Ram's) holy lotus-like feet*.

[*These two verses can be read in another way as follows: “A person who has true and sincere affection for Lord Ram's holy lotus-like feet is one who is regarded as being most sagacious, erudite, wise, learned and enlightened, as well as being a treasury trove of all knowledge and wisdom, and as being most intelligent and prudent.”] (7-8)

दो०. नाथ एक बर मागउँ राम कृपा करि देहु ।
जन्म जन्म प्रभु पद कमल कबहुँ घटै जनि नेहु ॥ ४९ ॥

dōhā.

nātha ēka bara māga'um̐ rāma kṛpā kari dēhu.
janma janma prabhu pada kamala kabahum̐ ghaṭai jani nēhu. 49.

Sage Vasistha prayed to Lord Ram: 'Oh Lord (nātha)! I ask for one boon (blessing) from thee, which prithe be gracious to grant me, and it is that I may have an abiding affection for thine august and holy lotus-like feet in all the births I have to take, an affection that would never diminish in any of my births.'¹ (Doha no. 49)

[Note—¹Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 4-6 that precede Doha no. 24 (citizens of Ayodhya); (ii) Doha nos. 129 and 131 (sage Valmiki); (b) Aranya Kand, (iii) Chaupai line no. 26 that precedes Doha no. 11 (sage Sutikshan); (iv) Chaupai line nos. 10-11 that precede Doha no. 13 (sage Agastya).]

चौ०. अस कहि मुनि बसिष्ठ गृह आए । कृपासिंधु के मन अति भाए ॥ १ ॥
हनूमान भरतादिक भ्राता । संग लिए सेवक सुखदाता ॥ २ ॥
पुनि कृपाल पुर बाहेर गए । गज रथ तुरग मगावत भए ॥ ३ ॥

caupāī.

asa kahi muni basiṣṭa gr̥ha ā'ē. kṛpāsindhu kē mana ati bhā'ē. 1.
hanūmāna bharatādika bhrātā. saṅga li'ē sēvaka sukhadātā. 2.
puni kṛpāla pura bāhēra ga'ē. gaja ratha turaga magāvata bha'ē. 3.

After offering his obeisance to Lord Ram, sage Vasistha came back to his home. The sage's politeness and humility immensely pleased the heart of the Lord who was an ocean of mercy, compassion and kindness (kṛpāsindhu). (1)

By-and-by, Lord Ram, who gives joy, happiness and delight to those who serve him and are his followers (sēvaka sukhadātā), went outside the city of Ayodhya, and he took Hanuman and his brothers along. (2)

Then the Lord, who is merciful and kind (kṛpāla), called for well-bred elephants, chariots and horses. (3)

देखि कृपा करि सकल सराहे । दिए उचित जिन्ह जिन्ह तेइ चाहे ॥ ४ ॥
हरन सकल श्रम प्रभु श्रम पाई । गए जहाँ सीतल अवँराई ॥ ५ ॥
भरत दीन्ह निज बसन डसाई । बैठे प्रभु सेवहिं सब भाई ॥ ६ ॥

dēkhi kṛpā kari sakala sarāhē. di'ē ucita jinha jinha tē'i cāhē. 4.
harana sakala śrama prabhu śrama pāī. ga'ē jahām̐ sītala avam̐rāī. 5.

bharata dīnha nija basana ḍasā'ī. baiṭhē prabhu sēvahiṁ saba bhā'ī. 6.

Lord Ram surveyed them and was kind enough to praise them in a graceful manner. Then he gifted them (i.e. the elephants, the chariots and the horses) to those whom he deemed eligible to receive them, keeping in mind the wishes of the recipients (i.e. the Lord asked each recipient to choose any one or more of the entities that were lined up to be given as gifts in accordance with their requirement and liking).

[To wit, Lord Ram gifted these elephants, chariots and horses to noble men, chiefs of the many divisions of the royal army, and others who deserved them. This was a sort of a gesture by the Lord to express his appreciation and grant honours to those who served him and the kingdom loyally, diligently and with integrity. But while granting these gifts, the Lord asked the recipients to make a choice of their own in accordance with their liking and need, and take away any one or more of the elephants, horses and chariots that were earmarked for this purpose.] (4)

Lord Ram felt a wee-whit tired after this exercise. Verily, it is such a wonder that the Lord who removes all sorts of weariness of others would himself feel weary by such a simple exercise as granting gifts to others.

[It is such an irony because the same Lord Ram had traveled on foot on the long journey through the forest and had successfully won the epic war of Lanka, without feeling weary or tired or fatigued even for a while. But the Lord wished to give a subtle message here—which is that if one begins to live a life of luxury, as the Lord was currently doing after ascending the throne of the prosperous and wealthy kingdom of Ayodhya where there was no dearth of material comforts and pleasures, one would be inclined to avoid physical labour, which in turn would make the person lazy and indolent. Therefore, a person should never indulge in leading a life of luxury and physical comfort beyond a limit as it would have a negative impact on his physical fitness and health.] (5)

Observing that Lord Ram was feeling tired and wished to sit down, Bharat spread his own shawl on the ground and requested the Lord to sit down upon it. The Lord accepted Bharat's offer and sat down on the shawl while being served by all his brothers. (6)

मारुतसुत तब मारुत करई । पुलक बपुष लोचन जल भरई ॥ ७ ॥
हनूमान सम नहिं बड़भागी । नहिं कोउ राम चरन अनुरागी ॥ ८ ॥
गिरिजा जासु प्रीति सेवकाई । बार बार प्रभु निज मुख गाई ॥ ९ ॥

mārutasuta taba māruta kara'ī. pulaka bapuṣa lōcana jala bhara'ī. 7.
hanūmāna sama nahim̐ barābhāgī. nahim̐ kō'u rāma carana anurāgī. 8.
giriṣā jāsū prīti sēvakā'ī. bāra bāra prabhu nija mukha gā'ī. 9.

When Lord Ram was seated, Hanuman, the son of the wind-god, held a fan in his hand and began to wave it gently so that a current of cool breeze blew over the Lord to give him comfort.

While doing so, Hanuman felt thrilled in his body and tears of joy swelled in his eyes (for being fortunate enough to be able to serve the Lord to the exclusion of all other attendants). (7)

Verily indeed, in all sooth and without any gainsay, there is no living being as fortunate and blessed as Hanuman was, and of equal importance is the fact that there is no one who has the sort of depth of devotion and purity of affection for the holy feet of Lord Ram as Hanuman had.’ (8)

[Lord Shiva told goddess Girija, his consort to whom he was narrating this divine Story of Lord Ram—] ‘Oh Girija (gīrijā)! What more can be said in the honour and praise of Hanuman whose sincerity and purity of love and affection for Lord Ram had been repeatedly acknowledged by the Lord himself when he spoke about Hanuman?

[It was surely a rarest of rare honour for Hanuman that Lord would himself affirm, in his own words, that no one was dearer to him than Hanuman was.]¹ (9)

[Note—¹In this context, refer to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Kishkindha Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 3—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 4; (b) Sundar Kand, (ii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 32—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 33.

We also read that Sita, the consort of Lord Ram and an incarnation of goddess Laxmi, has also blessed Hanuman that he would have great devotion for Lord Ram, would be the Lord’s favourite, and went to the extent of calling him a ‘son’. To reciprocate, Hanuman has called Sita his ‘mother’. In this context, refer to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Sundar Kand, (i) Doha no. 14 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-2, 9-10 that precede it; (ii) Doha no. 16 along with Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes it; (iii) Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 16; (b) Lanka Kand, (iii) Doha no. 107 along with Chanda line nos. 1-4 that precede it.]

दो०. तेहिं अवसर मुनि नारद आए करतल बीन ।
गावन लगे राम कल कीरति सदा नबीन ॥ ५० ॥
dōhā.

tēhiṁ avasara muni nārada ā'e karatala bīna.
gāvana lagē rāma kala kīrati sadā nabīna. 50.

On that occasion, sage Narad came there with his favourite Indian lute in his hand. As soon as he reached there, he used the lute to sing the glories and divinity of Lord Ram which always have freshness and charm around them, which are always spiritually rejuvenating, as well as enthralling for the mind and the heart of the listener as well as the singer. (Doha no. 50)

चौ०. मामवलोकय पंकज लोचन । कृपा बिलोकनि सोच बिमोचन ॥ १ ॥
नील तामरस स्याम काम अरि । हृदय कंज मकरंद मधुप हरि ॥ २ ॥
caupāī.

māmaṣalōkaya paṅkaja lōcana. kṛpā bilōkani sōca bimōcana. 1.
nīla tāmarasa syāma kāma ari. hṛdaya kaṇja makaranda madhupa hari. 2.

Sage Narad prayed: ‘Oh Lord with lotus-like eyes! Your mere glance is so benignant, gracious and benevolent that it is able to provide freedom from all miseries and torments of those who are blessed enough to be glanced even for a fraction of a moment by you. Oh gracious Lord, please be kind to cast your benign glance upon me too. (1)

Oh Lord Hari (another name of Lord Ram as he was a manifestation of Lord Vishnu who is also known by this name, which is one of the many names of the Lord)! You have a complexion like that of a dark-hued lotus flower.

And, you are like the bee that enjoys the nectarine bliss obtained by drinking pure honey present in the heart of Lord Shiva who was a destroyer of Kaamdeo, the patron god of passions and lust¹. (2)

[Note—¹This incident and its background cause is narrated in detail in: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 82—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 88.

Kaamdeo represents the negative traits of passions, lust and desire for sensual gratification, as well as longing for the pleasures and enjoyment of material things of this gross world. By destroying Kaamdeo, Lord Shiva had symbolically eliminated these negativities from his heart, thereby rendering it free from all worldly corruptions. Shiva, by eliminating Kaamdeo, had vanquished, defeated and trounced all evil and negative forces that taint the purity of a person’s heart, corrupt his intellect, and cause havoc for his mental peace.

According to the Upanishads, the subtle space of the heart is where the Atma, the soul, lives; it is also the place where one enshrines the virtues of love and affection for the Lord God. The subtle space of the heart is a sacred and consecrated place where the Atma, a representative of the Lord God, resides. It is because the Atma is pure consciousness, and it represents the cosmic Consciousness that resides in the individual as his own ‘self’. The ‘cosmic Consciousness’ is known as Brahm, the Supreme Being, who is also known as the ‘Parmatma’, the supreme Atma, with his counterpart being the individual’s Atma.

Once the subtle space of the heart is freed from all corruptions, the pristine purity of the Atma, which, as stated herein above, is in fact pure consciousness, comes to the fore. The Atma, being ‘pure consciousness’, is self-illuminated, and when the covering of impurities is removed, its natural shine illuminates the inner-self of a living being.

This principle is reflected in this verse. The obvious message is this: Lord Ram loves purity of the heart; he would like to live in the heart of those who have their hearts as pure and clean as that of Lord Shiva.]

जातुधान बरूथ बल भंजन । मुनि सज्जन रंजन अघ गंजन ॥ ३ ॥

भूसुर ससि नव बृंद बलाहक । असरन सरन दीन जन गाहक ॥ ४ ॥

jātudhāna barūtha bala bhañjana. muni sajjana rañjana agha gañjana. 3.
bhūsurā sasi nava bṛṇḍa balāhaka. asarāna sarāna dīna jana gāhaka. 4.

Oh Lord, you are a destroyer of the powerful army of demons.

[To wit, Lord Ram can eliminate even the most powerful of negative and sinful forces in this world which torment the creatures and create untold misery and havoc for them.]

You grant happiness and joy to saintly people who are pious and spiritual in their disposition. At the same time, you eliminate sins, vices and all sorts of evil along with their negative consequences. (3)

For the symbolic crop-growing fields of farmers represented by the Brahmins (i.e. the learned, elderly and wise people in the society), you are like rain-bearing clouds.

[To wit, just like the rain-bearing clouds shower rain on the ground and help the farmers with rich crops, your grace and benevolence lend support and encouragement to the Brahmins so that they can act as guides and teachers to show, without having any kind of fear, the right and the correct path to the society so that it can benefit from their knowledge and expert advice.]

You grant shelter to those who are without any shelter. Similarly, you willingly grant refuge to those who are lowly and shunned by the world.

[To wit, you welcome even the lowliest in the world who come to you seeking refuge; you not only accept them but also bless them.] (4)

भुज बल बिपुल भार महि खंडित । खर दूषन बिराध बध पंडित ॥ ५ ॥

रावनारि सुखरूप भूपबर । जय दसरथ कुल कुमुद सुधाकर ॥ ६ ॥

bhuja bala bipula bhāra mahi khaṇḍita. khara dūṣana birādha badha paṇḍita.
5.

rāvanāri sukhārūpa bhūpabara. jaya dasaratha kula kumuda sudhākara. 6.

Oh Lord! You have eliminated the burden of the earth (i.e. eliminated those who tormented and cause innumerable miseries to the inhabitants of earth) repeatedly by employing the strength of your able arms¹.

You have proved your skills and mettle by eliminating the most formidable and ferocious demons such as Khar, Dushan² and Viradha³. (5)

You are an enemy of the demon king Ravana whom you vanquished⁴.

You are an embodiment of bliss, happiness and beatitude.

You are the most exalted in the community of great Kings and Emperors.

Glory to you oh Lord, for you are like a moon for the lily-like family of king Dasrath of Ayodhya. [To wit, just like the moon makes the lily flower bloom, your presence gives joy and happiness as well as glories and fame to the illustrious family of king Dasrath.] (6)

[Note—¹In this context, refer to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, (i) Doha no. 121 along with Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede it; (ii) Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 184—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 187; (b) Lanka Kand,

(iii) Chanda line no. 10 that precedes Doha no. 111; (iv) Chanda line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 113.

²Elimination of Khar and Dushan: refer to Ram Charit Manas, (a) Aranya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 18—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 21; (b) Lanka Kand, (ii) Chanda line nos. 2-4 that precede Doha no. 113.

³Viradha: refer to Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-7 that precede Doha no. 7.

⁴Ravana: refer to Ram Charit Manas, (a) Lanka Kand, (i) Doha no. 102—to Chaupai line no. 10 that precedes Doha no. 103; (ii) Chanda line nos. 6-7 that precede Doha no. 113.]

सुजस पुरान बिदित निगमागम । गावत सुर मुनि संत समागम ॥ ७ ॥
 कारुणीक व्यलीक मद खडं न । सब बिधि कुसल कोसला मंडन ॥ ८ ॥
 कलि मल मथन नाम ममताहन । तुलसिदास प्रभु पाहि प्रनत जन ॥ ९ ॥

sujasa purāna bidita nigamāgama. gāvata sura muni santa samāgama. 7.
 kārunika byalika mada khaṇḍana. saba bidhi kusala kōsalā maṇḍana. 8.
 kali mala mathana nāma mamatāhana. tulasidāsa prabhu pāhi pranata jana.
 9.

Your glories, divinity, holiness and majesty are revealed by the ancient scriptures such as the Vedas, the Purans and the Tantra texts¹.

They are also sung and glorified in laudatory terms by the gods, as well as the great sages and saints during the many discourses and congregations that are held by them. (7)

You show mercy, compassion and kindness to one and all. You destroy all kinds of false prides, and pretentiousness accompanying ego and a misplaced sense of undue self-importance.

Verily indeed, you are wise and skilled in everything and all respects as the illustrious King of Ayodhya. (8)

Your holy and divine name² has the mystical ability and a magical power that can destroy all sorts of sins and their evil consequences that are associated with the corrupt era known as 'Kali Yuga' (which is the 4th and the current era of the 4-era one cycle of creation and destruction).

Oh the great Lord of Tulsidas (tulasidāsa prabhu)³, please grant thy benevolent blessing to me and protect me.' (9)

[Note—¹Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 49.

²The glories and mystical powers of the holy and divine name of Lord Ram have been enumerated in detail in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that

precedes Doha no. 19—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 28; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 2-5 that precede Doha no. 46.

³Goswami Tulsidas, the saint-poet who has penned this holy Book known as ‘Ram Charit Manas’ which we are fortunate to be reading now, was a great and celebrated devotee of Lord Ram. His purity and sincerity of devotion and his complete dedication to Lord Ram has been acclaimed and repeatedly acknowledged over the centuries.

Now since he was very close to Lord Ram at the spiritual level, since he had a direct connect with the Lord at the subtle level of his heart, therefore he took pride, not in the negative sense the word ‘pride’ is usually understood to mean, but in the positive sense that entails having a sense of joy, honour and privilege when one can confidently claim that he is very close to Lord Ram, something that a true devotee can only claim. This devotee has no second thoughts while declaring that Lord Ram is ‘his Lord’, just like the case of a great and famous king’s subject deriving great joy and feeling proud when he goes out on a travel and tells people of other kingdoms that such-and-such great king is ‘his king’ when he interacts with them and hears them praise the king of his kingdom.

That is why when sage Narad praised Lord Ram and sought the Lord’s blessings, Tulsidas says that the Lord, whom Narad was praying to, was “Tulsidas’ Lord Ram”, and no other Lord.]

दो०. प्रेम सहित मुनि नारद बरनि राम गुन ग्राम ।
सोभासिंधु हृदयँ धरि गए जहाँ बिधि धाम ॥ ५१ ॥

dōhā.

prēma sahita muni nārada barani rāma guna grāma.
sōbhāsindhu hṛdayam̐ dhari ga'e jahām̐ bidhi dhāma. 51.

Sage Narad affectionately narrated the glories, the holiness and the divinity of Lord Ram through the medium of his prayers.

After that, he (Narad) enshrined in his heart the image of the gracious Lord Ram, who was an ocean of sweetness and charm, and went back to the heaven where the abode of the creator Brahma was located. (Doha no. 51)

{Now at this juncture, we shall pause for a little while to examine the flow of the narrative of this holy Book ‘Ram Charit Manas’. For all practical purposes, with sage Narad’s prayers the narration that directly describes the story of Lord Ram, usually known as the ‘Ramayana’, has come to an end.

What follows next, now onwards, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 52 herein below—right upto Doha no. 130 which marks the end of the present Canto called Uttar Kand as well as the end of the Book ‘Ram Charit Manas’, is a narrative that closely reflects the pattern which is commonly observed while one examines it in the context of the Vedas and the Upanishads.

The Upanishads are in fact called ‘Vedanta’, literally meaning the ‘end part of the Vedas’, but this meaning is very misleading, for the Upanishads are not any kind of appendices to the Vedas as they might erroneously appear to be, but are an integral

part of the Vedas. The main purpose why the Upanishads have been assigned a separate name and given an independent identity of their own from the Vedas is to filter out the essence of the Vedas, to separate the profound metaphysical, spiritual and theological philosophies and principles that are enshrined in and are part of the voluminous texts of Vedas that contain hundreds and thousands of verses and Mantras (spiritual formulas), and present these principles and philosophies in an easy-to-follow, understand and implement format.

The Upanishads endeavour to comprehensibly filter out, collate and bring together at a place the whole gamut of metaphysical, spiritual and theological philosophies and principles of the Vedas so as to make them easily accessible, comprehensible and practical to implement by spiritual seekers and aspirants who strive to attain self-realisation, wisdom and enlightenment, as well as seek to attain spiritual bliss, beatitude and felicity of Brahm-realisation without having to navigate through the vast and almost intractable texts of the Vedas, which more often than not result in more confusion than removing doubts, and almost drowns a person in endless chains of verses and Mantras just like one gets drowned in a whirlpool of an ocean. The result is that instead of finding deliverance and enlightenment, a person gets entangled in the web of their voluminous texts, without deriving the real spiritual reward that one has set out to attain.

With the same purpose in mind, the wise and learned poet-saint Tulsidas decided to bring out the spiritual message enshrined in this holy Book called 'Ram Charit Manas' by narrating the following episode of the saintly crow Kaagbhusund giving a discourse to Garud, the heavenly mount of Lord Vishnu, when Garud approached him to remove his delusions, and enlighten him not only about the truth of Lord Ram but also about the real spiritual benefits that one gets, or should aim to get, by reading and hearing the Lord's divine Story.

While the main text of the Book 'Ram Charit Manas' dwells in narrating the life and time of Lord Ram, with great spiritual, metaphysical and theological principles and philosophies woven into the text as its integral part, but often times they get lost in the maze and the flow of the main story. Hence, to highlight them, to bring them to the fore, to emphasize their importance and significance, Tulsidas decided to bring them together in a comprehensive manner and put them at a single place in the form of a narrative that describes the discourse that Kaagbhusund gave Garud.

Hence, the part of the 'Ram Charit Manas' that follows herein below is called the "Kaagbhusund Ramayan" much like the Upanishads of the Vedas. It is so-called because it narrates the divine story of Lord Ram in an exclusive manner as Kaagbhusund had narrated it to Garud.

So therefore, from the perspective of the relationship between the Vedas and the Upanishads as has been pointed out in the beginning of this brief introductory interlude, the narration of the story of Lord Ram prior to Doha no. 51 of Uttar Kand as we have been reading till now, it is like the 'Vedas', while what follows herein below, the text which we have called 'Kaagbhusund Ramayan', is like the 'Upanishad' part of the Vedas.

That said, let us now delve a little deeper into this 'Kaagbhusund Ramayan' and learn more about it before we proceed with our reading.

The narrative of the 'Kaagbhusund Ramayan' is rich in spiritual content, and it stresses on the value and importance of the glorious virtue of devotion and affection for Lord God and the need to surrender oneself to Him as a means of attaining fulfillment in life as well as to have a sense of abiding peace, bliss and beatitude.

The ‘Kaagbhusund Ramayan’ is also known as the “Aadi Ramayan” (*ādi-rāmāyaṇa*) because it is the most ancient and the first narrative of the sacred and divine story that describes the life and time of Lord Ram, a manifestation of the Supreme Being in the form of a human being on earth, and the deeds done by the Lord during his sojourn on earth.

It is ‘the most ancient and the first such narration’ of the story of Lord Ram because it was first conceived by Lord Shiva, the wisest, the most enlightened and self-realised Lord God amongst all the Gods, in his Mana (mind and heart) during meditation as he was contemplating on the divine form of Lord Ram, his revered deity¹. When the appropriate time came he had revealed it to his consort Uma or Parvati when she showed her eagerness to hear it, and then to the saintly crow named Kaag-Bhusund². Hence, these two were the first hearers of this story.

In due course of time the sacred story of Lord Ram was narrated by the saintly crow Kaag-Bhusund to Garud, the mount of Lord Vishnu³. Hence, this Kaag-Bhusund Ramayan—the ‘Aadi Ramayan’—is the first ever narration of the holy story of Lord Ram by any Jiva, a living being, to another Jiva—i.e. Kaag-Bhusund to Garud respectively.

Lord Shiva would have kept the story to himself because it is so profound and mystical in its nature that if it is revealed to a wrong person who has no faith in Lord Ram, it is more likely to cause grievous damage by way of skepticism, absurd interpretations and irrational logics to demean the divinity and holiness of the Lord than serve any worthwhile spiritual purpose⁴. In both the cases of Parvati and Garud we find that Lord Shiva has revealed this story to them because he found that they were eager to hear it⁵.

The above reason is the primary cause why Shiva had revealed this story in the beginning, thereby making it the “*ādi-rāmāyaṇa*”, i.e. the first version of the divine story of Lord Ram.

Another important reason why the story of the Ramayan as narrated by the crow-saint Kaagbhusund is called ‘Aadi Ramayan’ is this: The most primary form of speech is the sound that is made in the throat, the sound of the vowel. As the world evolved and developed, a necessity was felt for more clarity in expression, and vowels proved insufficient to handle the increased demand. So was sowed the seed for development of the spoken word which underwent refinement over time to present us with the form of the spoken word which we know as a modern language. To fulfil the requirement of better modes of expression and understanding for which the vowels proved totally insufficient, the consonants were developed, and they served to compliment the vowels to form the modern language.

Hence, the Aadi language was the one that had no articulate words and primarily consisted of sounds made in the throat. When a crow crows, he merely makes a sound using the vocal cords. Though we humans may not understand what a crow says, but others of his like can easily understand what is being said. So therefore, when the wisest of the birds, i.e. the saintly crow named Kaagbhusund, repeated the story of the Ramayan that he had heard from Lord Shiva in a very primitive language, it surely is the most ancient and the first version of this holy story of Ramayan that is being recited or sung or narrated ever.

Hence, the story of the Ramayan as told by Kaagbhusund is aptly called the the “Aadi Ramayan”, i.e. the most ancient version of the story of Lord Ram that was preached to a disciple by a learned teacher.

Subsequently however, as time passed, others too wished to hear it and benefit from its spiritual wisdom and nectar. Others heard it and so it was transmitted from

one generation of sages, seers and saints to another by the oral method of transmission, viz. by hearing and narrating. The first amongst them were sages Yagyavalkya and Bharadwaj. While sage Yagyavalkya had heard it from Kaag-Bhusund directly, Bharadwaj had heard it from Yagyavalkya⁶.

Kaag-Bhusund or Kaagbhusund was a blessed and fortunate soul though his body was that of a crow as he had been directly blessed by Lord Ram who granted him an eternal life that would be steeped in wisdom and devotion, a life which would be free from all the taints of worldly delusions⁷. Rarely had the Lord blessed anyone with this boon. Even Lord Shiva had not only praised the spiritual stature and wisdom of this saintly crow⁸ but had himself heard him narrate the story of Lord Ram when he went in disguise and mingled with the audience to hear it incognito⁹.

Amongst the many listeners of this story from Kaag-Bhusund was Garud, the mount of Lord Vishnu. Garud had become confused about the reality of Lord Ram and was so extremely perturbed in his mind and heart that he could not rest¹⁰. So he went to Narad who advised him to go to the creator Brahma, who in turn directed him to Lord Shiva, and Shiva finally told him to go to Kaag-Bhusund's hermitage to hear the sacred and divine story of Lord Ram in order to overcome his delusions and accompanying bewilderments and restlessness¹¹.

The story of "Kaag-Bhusund Ramayan" was narrated by Lord Shiva to his consort Parvati when she had expressed surprise as to how it was ever possible that a humble bird such as a crow could be so erudite and enlightened that even her husband, Lord Shiva, would be so thrilled when he heard the divine story of Lord Ram being narrated by the former, and if indeed the crow was so highly spiritually exalted as Shiva says he was then why was he a 'crow' in the first place, because a crow is deemed to be of a very low birth in the hierarchy of creation; he should have been of a higher birth instead of being a crow if he was so enlightened and spiritually exalted¹².

Lord Shiva grabbed this opportunity to preach many important principles of metaphysics and spirituality while narrating the Kaag-Bhusund Ramayan for the benefit of Parvati. He wished to tell her that the real good from hearing the divine story of Lord Ram's life and deeds in this world comes when one understands the import of the subtle and sublime spiritual message that it contains, when one imbibes its teachings and inculcates auspicious and noble values that it stands for in one's own life so as to improve one's own self both in terms of happiness in his temporal life in this world as well as for attaining spiritual bliss and salvation in the life hereafter. And therefore, merely hearing it as a re-telling of some ancient saga pertaining to some noble prince would be a fruitless exercise and time wasted.

This story titled "Kaag-Bhusund Ramayan" is an integral part of the epic Book known as 'Ram Charit Manas'. It was penned by one of the greatest, most respected and well-known poet saints of 16th century India called Goswami Tulsidas {birth: Hindu year Samvat 1589, corresponding to 1532 a.d; death: Sraavan Shukla Saptami of Samvat 1680, corresponding to 1623 a.d.}. Therefore, the present Book "Kaag-Bhusund Ramayan" is as outstanding, important and spiritually significant as the epic Book 'Ram Charit Manas' itself. The title "Ram Charit Manas" literally means the divine story of Lord Ram that describes the life, time and acts of the Lord as they are revealed in the heart of the Lord's devotee, where the heart is compared to a lake in which is filled the nectar of devotion, reverence and love for the Lord. The spiritual value of this Book has been elaborately highlighted in the preamble as well as the epilogue of Ram Charit Manas itself¹³.

Goswami Tulsidas, who is the author of the principal epic 'Ram Charit Manas' of which Kaagbhusund Ramayan is an integral part, was a very wise and clever saint. He had narrated the story related to the times and deeds of Lord Ram, but he had his doubts whether those who would read it will actually understand its hidden meaning. His doubts were justified—because the life and behaviour of Lord Ram was like any other noble prince, and one would be inclined to treat him as an ordinary human. Even Lord Shiva's consort Sati got confused about who Lord Ram actually was when she saw him wandering in the forest, and so was Garud who also got perplexed inspite of the fact that he is very close to Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Lord of creation, by virtue of him being Vishnu's mount, and the fact that Lord Ram was an incarnation of Vishnu. This being the case, there would be no wonder if ordinary humans would get deluded and confused about the real identity of Lord Ram. So, it was imperative that this confusion is removed.

Besides this, it was important that the hearer of the divine story of Ramayan should spiritually benefit from it. So Tulsidas incorporated the Kaagbhusund Ramayan as narrated by Lord Shiva in the main text of his epic 'Ram Charit Manas' with the intention that essential principles of metaphysics and spirituality could be taught in a simple language to all those who read about the life and times of Lord Ram so as to benefit them in every way.

This erudite saint also knew the doubting mentality of the world and the skeptic nature of the people who would read his Ramayan in the future: that they would be highly cynical of him and charge him of being biased in favour of his chosen deity Lord Ram by raising Ram to a high pedestal of divinity that the latter perhaps does not deserve by twisting or tweaking the story to suit his purpose.

So Tulsidas played his cards carefully, and with prudence, by clearly asserting that he is merely re-telling the story of Lord Ram that has been already told by ancient sages and seers from time immemorial, and that he is not doing it to prove his scholarship or poetic skills but only to find peace for his soul as well as to purify his mind and speech. This establishes his objectivity in the narration¹⁴.

Therefore, instead of telling the story of Ramayan directly in the first-person-narrative style, he has clearly said that he is narrating what sage Yagyawalkya had said to sage Bharadwaj, what Lord Shiva said to Parvati, and other exalted sages such as Valmiki and Veda Vyas¹⁵.

But of course Tulsidas has interspersed his own narration with nuggets of advice and wisdom based on his own experiences and understanding of the ancient scriptures, which add immense shine and depth to the narration of Ram Charit Manas, making it similar to the Upanishads and the Purans because it has the characteristics of both. While on the one hand it resembles the "Purans" as it narrates a divine 'story of the Lord God in one of his incarnations as Lord Ram', and on the other hand it resembles the "Upanishads" because it contains a huge treasure of spiritual and metaphysical knowledge for which the Upanishads are so famed.

Tulsidas has summed up the spiritual benefits of his efforts by saying that "if there is a big river and a good king builds a bridge across it, then it enables even a humble ant to cross this river with ease"¹⁶.

The "Kaagbhusund Ramayan" only briefly describes the story of the worldly life, time and deeds of Lord Ram¹⁷.

Its main thrust and focus however, as pointed out in the foregoing discussion, is on explaining the hidden spiritual message in this divine story, and how it would benefit the ordinary creature, and herein lies the great importance of this unique version of the story of "Ramayan". It teaches us how one would attain bliss and

peace, how he would be able to get liberation and deliverance from the tangle of miseries and torments in which he finds himself in this mundane world of delusions, and how the creature's soul can find emancipation and salvation for its own self even while remaining engaged in the duties assigned to him in this mundane world. Various aspects of metaphysics and spirituality are thoroughly explained by Kaagbhusund in a simple language and practical way that is shorn of high-flying terminology of the scriptures. This helps the profound spiritual message of the story of the "Ramayana" come within reach of even the humblest of creatures, thereby benefiting humanity at large like no other preaching and exposition on the scriptures has ever done and achieved success before.

The other salient features of the "Kaagbhusund Ramayan" are, inter-alia, the following:--

(a) It was narrated by Lord Shiva himself to Parvati, his consort, and therefore it acquires great spiritual value, authenticity and holiness, and finds a place which is at par with the rest of the text of holy book known as the 'Ram Charit Manas' of which it is a part.

(b) This Ramayan is intended to bring out and highlight the spiritual benefits that one gets by hearing, reading, studying and narrating the divine story of Lord Ram, the incarnate Supreme Being in a human form. It tells us the essential message of the divine story of Lord Ram's life and deeds, and how we could benefit from it, both in terms of our spiritual welfare as well as for a fruitful and peaceful life in this world¹⁸.

(c) It points out the different obstacles and shortcomings of character that one encounters in one's endeavour to become perfect and good, thereby helping a conscientious individual to strive to improve himself and attain a higher state of being¹⁹.

(d) It describes the cosmic form of Lord Ram as the Viraat Purush, the all-encompassing form of the Supreme Being²⁰, and explains the greatness of Lord Ram to prove the fact that Ram was not an ordinary prince of some ancient kingdom of Ayodhya²¹.

(e) It elucidates elaborately on the concepts of Bhakti (devotion), Maya (delusions), Gyan (true spiritual knowledge and enlightenment), Moha (worldly attractions and attachments) etc.²²; the characteristics of saints and non-saints²³; the unique features of Kali-yug, the present era which is deemed to be the most degrading of the four-era cycle of creation, its comparison with the other eras, and its one special goodness²⁴; and so on and so forth.

(f) During the course of discussions, the saintly-crow Kaagbhusund has answered seven great questions of Garud (the mount of Lord Vishnu to whom this Ramayan was narrated by Kaagbhusund) that have a direct bearing on the creatures spiritual welfare²⁵.

(g) It is in the style of many of the major Upanishads wherein a disciple asks certain metaphysical questions from his Guru or teacher, and the latter explains the relevant philosophy by way of an answer given in such details that all doubts in the mind of the disciple are removed. Here the disciple is Garud, the cosmic mount of Lord Vishnu, and the Guru is Kaagbhusund, the saintly crow who was fortunate to have been blessed by Lord Ram himself. The conversation removed all spiritual doubts in the mind of Garud.

Thus we observe that the essential spiritual message of the divine story of Lord Ram and how it would benefit the ordinary creature is the main purpose and thrust of Kaag-Bhusund Ramayan.

This said, now let us see who the protagonist of this Ramayan, sage Kaagbhusund, was. He was a crow by his physical body, but his ‘true self’, his Atma, his soul, was highly enlightened and spiritually elevated. By the divine grace of Lord Ram, no worldly misery, torment and taint ever affected him²⁶. He had attained immortality²⁷. He was exemplarily self-realised, wise, well-versed in the principles of spirituality and metaphysics, and a great saint who was praised even by Lord Shiva so much so that the latter derived immense peace when he heard the narration of the nectar-like story of Lord Ram being narrated by Kaagbhusund at his hermitage²⁸.

Kaagbhusund has described about his previous births himself when Garud wished to know about it. In his earlier life he was born as a Sudra (a low caste), then as a serpent due to a curse, then as a Brahmin, and finally as a crow in his present birth²⁹. He then goes on to explain why he loves this body of a crow though conventionally a crow is regarded with contempt and is despised by all as a lowly form of existence even amongst the species of creatures known as the ‘bird’³⁰.

Kaagbhusund was an expert in the knowledge of the divine story of Lord Ram, the Supreme Being in a human form, whose life, times and deeds are narrated by many bards and savants down the ages in numerous versions that are universally known by the name of “Ramayana”. He had acquired this knowledge naturally, without any effort due to the grace of Lord Ram upon him. All his wishes were automatically fulfilled. He was well-versed in all aspects of the philosophy of devotion and spirituality that helps a creature attain liberation and deliverance from this mortal gross world³¹.

Lord Shiva was so impressed by Kaagbhusund’s depth of knowledge and spiritual enlightenment that when Garud, the mount of Lord Vishnu, had once become deluded and needed advice to remove his doubts about the divinity of Lord Ram, and had approached Shiva to preach him and tell him the truth, the Lord thought it fit to send him to Kaag-Bhusund³².

What greater certificate is needed to prove Kaagbhusund’s highly exalted stature in the field of devotion and spirituality, as well as the level of his wisdom, self-realisation and enlightenment when even the greatest of all the Gods, Lord Shiva, had himself found peace when he had heard the in-depth narration of the divine story of Lord Ram as narrated by Kaag-Bhusund, and had consequentially referred Garud to him to hear this discourse.

Kaagbhusund had attained immortality and an exalted spiritual stature by his self-realisation and devotion for Lord Ram, the Supreme Being. This fact has been endorsed by Lord Shiva who himself is the most enlightened and the wisest of all the Gods³³, and acknowledged by Kaagbhusund himself³⁴.

{References: ¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 9, 11-12 that precede Doha no. 35.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-5 that precede Doha no. 30.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 64—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 68.

⁴Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (i) Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 38—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 39; and (ii) Uttar Kand, Doha no. 128 along with Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precede it.

⁵Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (i) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 128 with respect to Shiva revealing this divine story of Lord Ram to Parvati or Uma because she wanted to hear it affectionately; and (ii) Baal Kand, Chaupai line

no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 30 with respect to Shiva revealing it to crow-saint Kaagbhhusund because he found that the latter was eligible to hear it as he had profound devotion for Lord Ram in his heart and mind.

⁶Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5 that precedes Doha no. 30.

⁷Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Doha no. 83—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 88.

⁸Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-4 that precede Doha no. 62.

⁹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 55; and Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 56—to Doha no. 57.

¹⁰Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Doha no. 68 and Chaupai line no. 1 that follows it; and (ii) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 58—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 59.

¹¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 59—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 62.

¹²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 53—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 55.

¹³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 9; (ii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 31—to Doha no. 32; (iii) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 35—to Doha no. 43; and (b) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 126—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 130.

¹⁴Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 10 that precedes Doha no. 13; (ii) from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 8—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 14; (iii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 30—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 31; and (iv) Doha no. 35 and its preceding Chaupai line nos. 11-13.

¹⁵Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 3; (i) Chaupai line no. 10 that precedes Doha no. 13; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 30; (iii) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 14.

¹⁶Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 13.

¹⁷Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 64—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 68.

¹⁸Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 8-9 that precede Doha no. 55; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede Doha no. 61; (iii) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 64; (iv) Doha no. 68 ka; (v) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 64; (vi) Doha no. 72 ka; (vii) Doha no. 122 and its preceding Chaupai line nos. 7, 12-19; (viii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 123—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 125.

¹⁹Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 70—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 71.

²⁰Viraat Purush: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 80—to Doha no. 82.

²¹The greatness of Lord Ram: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 91—to Doha no. 92.

²²Bhakti, Maya, Gyan: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 4-6 that precedes Doha no. 59; (ii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 62; (iii) Chaupai line nos. 4-7 that precede Doha no. 71; (iv) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 72; (v) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 79; (vi) Chaupai line no. 3

that precedes Doha no. 85; (vii) from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 86—to Doha no. 87; (viii) Chaupai line nos. 1 that precedes Doha no. 116—to Chaupai line no. 15 that precedes Doha no. 120.

²³Saint and non-saint: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 14 that precedes Doha no. 120—to Chaupai line no. 27 that precedes Doha no. 121; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 125.

²⁴The Kali-Yuga, its benefits inspite of all its shortcomings, and its comparison with the other three eras of the 4-era one cycle of creation: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 97—to Doha no. 103.

²⁵The seven questions: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 121—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 122.

²⁶Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Doha no. 85 ka; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 94; (iii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 114.

²⁷Kaagbhusund was immortal like all self-realised souls: Refer—Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 57; (ii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 88; (iii) Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 94; and (iv) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 96.

²⁸Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Doha no. 57 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 1-10; (ii) Doha no. 63 kha.

²⁹Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand: (a) Sudra—Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 97; Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 109; (b) Serpent—Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 107; and Doha no. 109 kha along with its preceding Chaupai line no. 6; (c) Brahmin—Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 110; and finally (d) a Crow—Doha no. 112 ka.

³⁰Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 95—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 96.

³¹Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 88; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precede Doha no. 62; and (iii) Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 114.

³²Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Doha no. 60—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 62.

³³Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 57; (ii) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 62; and (iii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 94.

³⁴Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 96.

³⁵Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 8—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 10; (ii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 12—to Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 14.}

After being introduced to the text that follows herein below, let us now pick up the thread of the narrative from the point where we had left it at the end of Doha no. 51 a little while ago.

Lord Shiva had narrated the divine story of Lord Ram, the incarnate Supreme Being and the Lord God whom Shiva worshipped, to his consort Parvati. Shiva had told her about the immense spiritual significance and metaphysical importance of this sublime story which had thrilled Parvati exceptionally. Shiva had emphasised the fact that this is a story that not only gives spiritual bliss and peace to the hearer as well as the narrator, but also paves for their liberation and deliverance from this mundane world.

He wound up his discourse by saying that what he had told Parvati was once heard by him when he had attended its discourse at the hermitage of one saintly crow named Kaagbhusund, and its narration had made him extremely ecstatic, making him feel as if he had drunk the nectar of bliss and euphoria.

Parvati was baffled. A lot of questions popped-up in her head: Who was this crow Kaagbhusund; how had he attained such a high state of spiritual realisation and had become so extremely enlightened that Lord Shiva, who himself was the progenitor of this holy story of Lord Ram that is universally known as the “Ramayan”, would be so charmed by Kaagbhusund and fascinated by narration of the Ramayan by the latter; what was so special about Kaagbhusund’s narration that Shiva chose to quote it and single this crow for such lavish praise inspite of the fact that there is a long legend of great sages, seers and saints who have sung this sublime story of Ramayan down the ages, from time immemorial; and in the event that Kaagbhusund was indeed so exalted as Shiva indicates him to be then why did he become a ‘crow’ in the first place instead of having taken birth in some higher echelon of creation? {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 53—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 55.}

The highly sublime and spiritually fulfilling story of the ‘Ramayan’ as narrated by the saintly crow Kaagbhusund was the result of this inquisition by Parvati. Lord Shiva felt privileged that he has once again got an opportunity to narrate the holy story of Ramayan which would not only give him a renewed chance to fill his mind and heart with ecstasy and bliss but would also help him to further emphasise the glory and divinity of this holy story for the welfare of all the living beings in this creation. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (i) Baal Kand, Doha no. 120 ka—kha; and (ii) Uttar Kand, Doha no. 55 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 6-9.}

The “Kaagbhusund Ramayan”, therefore, is a blessing-in-disguise: it not only re-tells the divine story of Lord Ram but brings to the fore and explores some subtle points which might have missed the reader and the hearer alike during the earlier narration of the story in the main text of the epic ‘Ram Charit Manas’ of which it is a part.]

चौ०. गिरिजा सुनहु बिसद यह कथा । मैं सब कही मोरि मति जथा ॥ १ ॥

राम चरित सत कोटि अपारा । श्रुति सारदा न बरनै पारा ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

girijā sunahu bisada yaha kathā. maim saba kahī mōri mati jathā. 1.

rāma carita sata kōṭi apārā. śruti sārādā na baranai pārā. 2.

Lord Shiva said to his consort Parvati—‘Listen Girija (literally, the daughter of the king of the mountains; meaning Parvati). I have elaborately told you this divine and glorious story (of Lord Ram, known as the ‘Ramayan’), which is timeless and ageless, as best as I could and in the way my mind could understand it¹. (1)

The countless stories that narrate the innumerable deeds of Lord Ram (which he had done in his manifestation as a human prince in the kingdom of Ayodhya in different cycles of creation) are endless and without any dimension. They are eternal, and they defy understanding, counting and delineation so much so that even the Srutis (the

Vedas) and Sarda (Saraswati, the goddess of learning and knowledge) are not able to find an end to narrating them². (2)

[Note—¹When Lord Shiva had begun to narrate the story of Ramayan to Parvati he had told her that he would do so according to his understanding and wisdom. He had also hinted at that time that later on he would tell her the story as it was narrated by the saintly crow Kaagbhusund—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 120 kha and ga.

²Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 31—to Doha no. 32; and (ii) Doha no. 33 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 5-8.

Lord Ram's divine glories are endless and beyond the ability of the mind to comprehend and narrate. The Lord is eternal and infinite. Yet, legend of sages, seers and saints has attempted to narrate this story in their own limited way as a means to purify their mind and speech. Lord Shiva says that he is also doing the same. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 121.

Shiva's modesty and humbleness is shining through these verses. He does not claim that he is the best of all the narrators; he has not only given full credit to Kaagbhusund for narration of Ramayan, but goes on to say that when the great scriptures known as the Vedas as well the goddess of knowledge and speech known as Saraswati fail to describe the divine story of Ramayan to complete satisfaction, how can he claim to be perfect.

He also wishes to convey the idea that when even the Vedas, the primary scriptures unfolded by the creator Brahma himself, and Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge and speech, have failed to describe the divine story of Lord Ram fully—what they did narrate was like merely scratching its surface, then one can imagine the vastness and glory of this story that is known as the 'Ramayan'.

In fact, this glorious story has been told and retold thousands of times, but still there seems to be no end to its variations and narrators. It is timeless, ageless; it is like the ocean that has no beginning or end.

The wonderful thing to note here is that Lord Shiva has no sense of ego or pride in him. He has no compunctions in admitting his limitations and acknowledging the fact that though he himself is the greatest of all the gods (which is why he is honoured by the epithet 'Maha-Deva', literally meaning a Great God), the Supreme Being represented by Lord Ram is 'the greatest of all'. Shiva's admission of limited ability to describe the vastness of the story of Lord Ram though he was its primary conceiver and narrator is an example of modesty and humbleness. It does not mean at all that Shiva lacked wisdom or enlightenment, or that his own understanding or narration of the divine story of Lord Ram was lacking in any way, but it shows his greatness that he has no reservations in giving credit to others, in the present case it is the saintly crow Kaagbhusund, who have sung the divine story of the Ramayan.

The subtle message is obvious: good things must be shared by all, one must never boast of his wisdom and knowledge, and that the benevolence of the Lord is like nectar which is like a vast ocean whose water cannot be measured. And, just like the case of the ocean that has been artificially assigned different names but its water is the same everywhere, the divine story of Lord Ram has been narrated by a long legend of narrators, including Shiva and Kaagbhusund, but its beauty, its spiritual nectar remains the same.

Earlier also in the rendering of the epic Ram Charit Manas, we find this shining example of Lord Shiva's modesty when he says that what he describes is according to his limited wisdom and knowledge. Nowhere has he boasted of being an expert in the spiritual philosophy associated with the story of Ramayan: refer—Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 120-d.]

राम अनंत अनंत गुनानी । जन्म कर्म अनंत नामानी ॥ ३ ॥

जल सीकर महि रज गनि जाहीं । रघुपति चरित न बरनि सिराहीं ॥ ४ ॥

rāma ananta ananta gunānī. janma karma ananta nāmānī. 3.

jala sīkara mahi raja gani jāhīm. raghupati carita na barani sirāhīm. 4.

Lord Ram is infinite, and so are his glories. He has taken countless births, has done countless deeds, and his names are also countless¹. (3)

In fact, it may be possible to count the number of drops of water in rain, or the number of grains of sand on the surface of earth, but is absolutely impossible to describe the divine deeds and stories associated with Lord Ram², the Lord of the Raghu's line of illustrious kings of Ayodhya. (4)

[Note—¹The infinity of Lord Ram and his glories have been emphasised elsewhere also in Ram Charit Manas: Refer—Baal Kand, (i) Doha no. 33; and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 114.

²Refer also to Srimad Bhagwat, 2/7/40 where it is said that even if there is someone so great that he has been able to count the number of dust particles on earth, yet no one can ever claim to be able to count the glories of the Lord God.

There is another instance in Srimad Bhagwat where the same idea, that the glories and names of Lord are uncountable and infinite, has been emphasised. When Muchakunda, the son of Mandhata of the Ikshwaku race, asked Lord Krishna about the latter's birth, clan and deeds, Krishna replied—'My names, births and deeds are infinite and countless. I can't count them and enumerate them to you. Even if in some person is able to count the physical grains of dust on the surface of earth during the course of his numerous births, adding to the tally of the total number of dusts particles counted in the previous birth to the total counted in the present birth, he still won't be able to count my (Krishna's) names, deeds and glories.' Refer: Srimad Bhagwat, 10/51/38-40.]

बिमल कथा हरि पद दायनी । भगति होइ सुनि अनपायनी ॥ ५ ॥

उमा कहिउँ सब कथा सुहाई । जो भुसुंड़ि खगपतिहि सुनाई ॥ ६ ॥

कछुक राम गुन कहेउँ बखानी । अब का कहौं सो कहहु भवानी ॥ ७ ॥

bimala kathā hari pada dāyanī. bhagati hō'i suni anapāyanī. 5.

umā kahi'um̐ saba kathā suhā'ī. jō bhusuṇḍi khagapatihi sunā'ī. 6.

kachuka rāma guna kahē'um̐ bakhānī. abā kā kahauṁ sō kahahu bhavānī. 7.

This sacred story enables a person to attain the divine abode of Lord Hari (Vishnu)¹; it also simultaneously bestows upon the person the blessing of having an eternal devotion ('Bhakti') for the Lord^{2.*} (5)

[Lord Shiva said to Parvati—] 'Oh Uma (Parvati)! I have told you the entire story (of Lord Ram) which was narrated by (the saintly crow) Kaagbhusund to Garud (the mount of Lord Vishnu when he was overcome with delusions and began to doubt the divinity and holiness of Lord Ram)³. (6)

I have described to you a few of the countless virtues and glories of Lord Ram⁴ (to the best of my ability⁵).

Now tell me, oh Bhavani (another name of Parvati), what more should I tell you about.⁶ (7)

[Note—Verse no. 5 makes it clear that the two great benefits of hearing the holy story of Lord Ram are the following—(i) It entitles the hearer to attain heaven, or from the metaphysical perspective, to attain liberation and deliverance from this mundane world of grossness and reach the higher spiritual existence of bliss and happiness symbolized by the abode of Lord Vishnu. (ii) It helps the hearer to develop the grand virtues of having unstinted and unflinching devotion for Lord God, which in turn paves the way for his all-round spiritual welfare. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 119.

¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 128.

²Saint Kaag-Bhusund has elaborately described the importance of having 'Bhakti' or devotion for Lord Hari (Lord Vishnu), who is represented by Lord Ram as the latter is a visible, a tangible form of Hari's invisible cosmic form, in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 115—to Doha no. 120.

*The other benefit, the 'third' one, is mentioned in Chaupai line no. 9 herein below where Parvati tells that one of the great benefits of hearing the divine story of Lord Ram is that the creature finds freedom from fear associated with this world consisting of an endless of birth and death and its associated horrors.

³Earlier, in the very beginning of the rendering of the epic story of Ramayan, we read that Lord Shiva tells Parvati that he will narrate to her the divine story of the life, times and deeds of Lord Ram as he had heard from sage Kaagbhusund—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 120-b.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 68 where Lord Shiva once again affirms that the version of the story of Ramayan which he had told Parvati is the one which Kaagbhusund had told Garud.

⁴Lord Shiva clearly indicates that no one should be under the delusions that whatever has been narrated in this story of Lord Ram known as the 'Ramayan' is a complete and comprehensive dossier about the Lord. It is merely a fractional part of the whole entity which is so vast and endless like the fathomless sky that no one can ever measure even one remote corner of its huge realm. What has been narrated here is just to help the creature become aware of the immense opportunities that lie before him

for his own spiritual welfare if he develops a sense of love, affection, devotion and complete submission towards Lord Ram.

Shiva has already asserted that it is impossible to fully narrate the divine story of Lord Ram hereinbefore in Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-4 that precede Doha no. 52.

⁵Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 52 hereinbefore.

⁶By saying this, Lord Shiva has left the doors open for Parvati to ask more questions so that all her doubts are satisfied. This is the way for a good narrator and a teacher—he always engages his audience or students respectively, and makes them feel free to ask questions and remove their doubts.

We shall read a little later how sage Kaagbhusund had engaged Garud in a free discussion about the different aspects of the story of Ramayan, as well as the many spiritual benefits one gets by hearing this divine story. In fact, the entire text of the ‘Kaagbhusund Ramayan’ revolves around this discourse.

We will note that the actual story of Ramayan has been narrated by Kaagbhusund only in brief (from Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 64—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 68). The major part of the Ramayan attributed to him is on the lines of the Upanishads where a learned teacher not only preaches but clearly explains the secrets of the scriptures to his disciples by elaborating on them and engaging the disciple by letting him ask questions and satisfy all his doubts. It’s not a one-way lecture from a high podium, but a session where all the doubts of the listener are removed. The intelligent teacher guesses what the student may doubt about, and explains the concepts even if the student is hesitant to ask him about them.]

सुनि सुभ कथा उमा हरषानी । बोली अति बिनीत मृदु बानी ॥ ८ ॥

धन्य धन्य मैं धन्य पुरारी । सुनेउँ राम गुन भव भय हारी ॥ ९ ॥

sunī subha kathā umā haraṣānī. bōlī atī binīta mṛdu bānī. 8.

dhan'ya dhan'ya mair̥ dhan'ya purārī. sunē'um̐ rāma guna bhava bhaya hārī.

9.

When Uma heard this auspicious story of Lord Ram (i.e. the ‘Ramayan’), she was thrilled and exhilarated. She prayerfully replied to Lord Shiva with words that were very sweet and pleasant to hear¹. (8)

Goddess Uma said—‘Oh Purari (one of the many names of Lord Shiva²)! I am thrice most fortunate and blessed because I have heard the divine praises, the divine virtues and glories of Lord Ram which have the potential to eliminate the dark fear of this world and its cycle of birth and death³. (9)

[Note—¹This is the magic of Lord Ram’s story: both the narrator and the hearer enjoy it equally; both of them are overcome with surging emotions of devotion and spirituality that make them ecstatic and overjoyed.

When Garud had heard the story of Ramayan from Kaagbhusund, he too was extremely ecstatic so much so that his wings swelled up with excitement—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 69-a.

Then later on we shall read that when Garud finally spoke to Kaagbhusund, his words were prayerful and extremely polite, the reason being that all his doubts had been removed—refer: Uttar Kand, Doha no. 124-b.

The same thing applies to Parvati here—all her doubts had been removed when she had heard the story of Lord Ram. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 52—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 53.

²Lord Shiva is called ‘Purari’ because he had slayed the demon known as Tripura.

³This is the third benefit of hearing the divine story of Lord Ram. The first two benefits are narrated in Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 52 herein above.]

दो०. तुहरी कृपाँ कृपायतन अब कृतकृत्य न मोह ।

जानेउँ राम प्रताप प्रभु चिदानंद संदोह ॥ ५२ (क) ॥

dōhā.

tumharī kṛpām̐ kṛpāyatana aba kṛtakṛtya na mōha.

jānē'um̐ rāma pratāpa prabhu cidānanda sandōha. 52 (a).

‘Oh merciful Lord! By your grace and benevolence, I feel extremely fulfilled today, and have no delusions or doubts left in my mind now¹. I have come to know the realities and the greatness and the glories of Lord Ram who is an eternal abode (or an embodiment) of (spiritual) bliss. (Doha no. 52 ka)

[Note—¹Parvati had been confused and confounded about the reality of Lord Ram. She wondered why the Supreme Lord of creation would become a man; why would he become a son of a king. Once, when she saw the Lord wondering in the forest in search of his wife Sita who had been abducted by the demon king Ravana as part of the great scheme laid out by the Supreme Lord to get rid of the cruel demons led by their king Ravana who had become immune to regular modes of punishments because of the blessings he got when he had done severe Tapa (penance) to please Brahma, the creator. When Parvati saw that Lord Shiva, her husband, bowed his head before Lord Ram, she wondered how it was possible that the Supreme Being, who is supposed to be all-knowing, would not know where his wife Sita was, and who had stolen her. She was also confused because the Lord who is supposed to be beyond worldly miseries and attachments would be so worried about his wife and grieve for her. So, she had asked her husband Lord Shiva to remove her doubts, and it was this reason why Shiva had narrated the story of the Ramayan to her. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 108—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 111.}]

नाथ तवानन ससि स्रवत कथा सुधा रघुबीर ।

श्रवन पुटन्हि मन पान करि नहिं अघात मतिधीर ॥ ५२ (ख) ॥

nātha tavānana sasi sravata kathā sudhā raghubīra.

śravana puṭanhi mana pāna kari nahim̐ aghāta matidhīra. 52 (b).

Oh Lord who has a firm conviction and a resolute mind ('Mati-dhir')¹! The nectar symbolized by Lord Ram's divine story drips from your mouth, and my ears are like the cup that continues to collect this dripping ambrosia but does not seem to feel contented (i.e. I want to hear more of it). (Doha no. 52 kha).

[Note—¹This is an important observation. It means that only those who have a firm and steady mind won't get lost in the deep sea of confusions and doubts associated with the myriad ways the Lord has made his presence felt in the world. They won't be deluded by the grossness of the world and confused by the mysterious ways of the Lord.

Merely hearing the story is not enough; one must understand its hidden message and learn to derive spiritual benefit from it. Otherwise it is like just hearing the rendition of some ancient mythological story. And this is possible only with a steady mind that does not fall victim to distractions, and is determined to pursue the truth so as to reach its goal of acquiring knowledge shorn of all falsehood.

The sight of Lord Ram wondering in the forest in search of his wife Sita had confused Parvati but had not confused Shiva. It is because Shiva had a steady mind that stood firm in its conviction about the divinity of Lord Ram as opposed to Parvati who unsteady mind was misled by the physical appearances of Lord Ram. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 48—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 52.]

चौ०. राम चरित जे सुनत अघाहीं । रस बिसेष जाना तिन्ह नाहीं ॥ १ ॥

जीवनमुक्त महामुनि जेऊ । हरि गुन सुनहिं निरंतर तेऊ ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

rāma carita jē sunata aghāhīm̐. rasa bisēṣa jānā tinha nāhīm̐. 1.

jīvanamukta mahāmuni jē'ū. hari guna sunahim̐ nirantara tē'ū. 2.

Those who feel satisfied by hearing the divine story of Lord Ram, those who think that hearing it once or twice is enough and there is no need to repeatedly hear it, such people have not become aware of its true beauty and sublimity as being a great source of nectar of spirituality that is a bestower of eternal bliss and liberation¹. (1)

Those great sages who have attained the highest level of spiritual realisation, and have consequently obtained ultimate beatitude and felicity even while they are still alive in this world and live in it like ordinary human beings, even such exalted sages continue to hear the divine story of Lord Hari (Ram) that praises the Lord's infinite glories and eclectic virtues². (2)

[Note—¹The same idea has been expressed by sage Valmiki when he told Lord Ram where the latter should live. Valmiki said that those whose ears are like an endless ocean in which all the mighty rivers pour their contents in a never-ending gush but

which never gets filled by them—the Lord should reside in the heart of such persons. In other words, Lord Ram should live in the heart of all such people who never feel satisfied by hearing the divine story of the Lord, his glories and praises. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 128 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 3-4.

²The great sages who have attained ‘Jivan Mukti’, meaning ‘obtaining spiritual liberation even while one continues to live in this gross mundane world’, find bliss, peace, felicity and beatitude by hearing the nectar-like story of Lord Ram. It helps them to wean their mind away from the world and its temptations and delusions, and focus it on something that is sublime and holy. Sage Valmiki has hinted to this in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 130. Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 42 which is explicit on this point.]

भव सागर चह पार जो पावा । राम कथा ता कहँ दृढ़ नावा ॥ ३ ॥

बिषइन्ह कहँ पुनि हरि गुन ग्रामा । श्रवन सुखद अरु मन अभिरामा ॥ ४ ॥

bhava sāgara caha pāra jō pāvā. rāma kathā tā kaham̐ ḍṛṛha nāvā. 3.
biṣa'inha kaham̐ puni hari guna grāmā. śravana sukhada aru mana abhirāmā.
4.

If anyone wants to cross this vast world of an endless cycle of birth and death and its associated delusions, torments and miseries which are like a formidable ocean instilling fear in the hearts of even the most courageous and brave, then the divine story of Lord Ram (known as the ‘Ramayan’) is like a robust and secure boat (i.e. a ship, though technically the word ‘Naava’ means a boat)¹. (3)

At the same time, those who like to enjoy listening to interesting stories being narrated that are both pleasant to hear as well as enchanting for the mind, stories that are sufficiently thrilling so as to keep them engaged and captivated by their sheer mystery and unending drama, such persons too find this divine story of Lord Ram very charming and fascinating to hear. (4)

[Note—¹The same idea has been expressed by the celestial sage Narad to sage Veda Vyas, the legendary narrator of the Srimad Bhagwat. Refer: Srimad Bhagwat, 1/6/35.

Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 64; (ii) Doha no. 126 and its preceding Chaupai line no. 1; (iii) Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 129; (iv) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 130.]

श्रवनवंत अस को जग माहीं । जाहि न रघुपति चरित सोहाहीं ॥ ५ ॥

ते जड़ जीव निजात्मक घाती । जिन्हहि न रघुपति कथा सोहाती ॥ ६ ॥

śravanavanta asa kō jaga māhīm. jāhi na raghupati carita sōhāhīm. 5.
tē jaṛa jīva nijātmaka ghātī. jinhahi na raghupati kathā sōhātī. 6.

Is there anyone alive in this world who has been empowered to hear with his ears but who does not like to hear the glories of Lord Raghupati (Ram) and is delighted to hear them¹? [In other words, the glories of Lord Ram and the stories associated with the Lord are so enchanting and captivating that all living beings who have been blessed with the organ of hearing known as the ‘ear’ feel happy and thrilled by listening to such stories and glories of the Lord, and there is no exception to it.] (5)

Indeed, such ‘Jivas’ (living-beings) who cannot tolerate hearing, or are reluctant to hear, the narrative of the divine stories and glories of Lord Raghupati are highly stupid and betrayers of their own souls². (6)

[Note—¹A similar idea is expressed in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 112.

²This is because the soul or the ‘Atma’ of every living-being, which is the latter’s ‘true self’, yearns to find peace, bliss, solace and succour as well as liberation and deliverance from this entrapping, mundane and gross world of continuous misery and pain, an objective that is easily met by hearing about Lord Ram and his divine glories. But the reluctance of some people in allowing their souls access to this wonderful spiritual nectar which can be easily accessed by allowing their ears to hear the narration of Lord Ram’s divine glories, forces their souls to remain tormented and troubled, which in effect is equivalent to ‘betraying’ their own true ‘self’, their ‘soul’, by forcing the latter to remain entangled in a mess represented by this world of misery and pain by denying it the chance to find its peace that can be had by hearing the soothing narrative of the divine stories of Lord Ram, though such people assert that they are the best well-wishers of their own selves. It’s a great irony of creation!

They are ‘stupid’ because they waste their precious life in forcing their ears to hear useless chatter arising from this gross and worthless world which will not help their souls to find peace and bliss in any imaginable way. Instead of putting this organ of hearing, known as the ‘ears’, gifted to them by the creator, to any good use, and in the process helping their own souls, their ‘own selves’, in finding a source of eternal peace and bliss by allowing their ears to simultaneously enjoy the narrative of nectar-like stories of Lord Ram alongside hearing other things of the world, stupid people stop their ears from enjoying this dual benefit which comes to it for free by being reluctant to hear, or outright shunning to hear, the stories and glories of Lord Ram.]

हरिचरित्र मानस तुम्ह गावा । सुनि मैं नाथ अमिति सुख पावा ॥ ७ ॥
तुम्ह जो कही यह कथा सुहाई । कागभसुंड़ि गरुड़ प्रति गाई ॥ ८ ॥

haricaritra mānasa tumha gāvā. suni mairm nātha amiti sukha pāvā. 7.
tumha jō kahī yaha kathā suhāī. kāgabhasuṇḍi garuṛa prati gāī. 8.

[Uma or Parvati said to Lord Shiva—] ‘Oh Lord! You have narrated the divine deeds and life of Lord Hari (Vishnu who had manifested himself in the body of Lord Ram)¹, which is like a lake of spiritual ambrosia sprouting from your blessed heart (‘Hari-

charitra” + “Manas”)², has given me immense delight and happiness. [And for this, I am highly obliged to you.] (7)

You have said that this divine story was narrated by the saint-crow named Kaagbhusund to Garud (the mount of Lord Vishnu)³. (8)

[Note—¹The story of Lord Vishnu assuming the human form as Lord Ram has been narrated in great detail by Lord Shiva himself in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 121—to Doha no. 191.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand—Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 35; and Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 30.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 53. Well, this was a great mystery for Parvati, and she expresses her doubts clearly in Doha no. 53 and its following verses herein below. She wondered: How can a crow be so enlightened and self-realised that even Garud, who is deemed to be the king of birds and one of the closest attendants of Lord Vishnu, would go and hear this divine story from the former? This story has been narrated and enjoyed by the greatest of sages, seers and saints, so how come a crow and other birds who are regarded as lowly creatures and are far lower in the rung of evolution as compared to intelligent humans, hear it, and if indeed it is the truth then where does Kaagbhusund live and how did he become so enlightened and blessed so as to be able to even enthrall you sufficiently enough so much so that you mince no words in praising him?]

दो०. बिरति ग्यान बिग्यान दृढ़ राम चरन अति नेह ।

बायस तन रघुपति भगति मोहि परम संदेह ॥ ५३ ॥

dōhā.

birati gyāna bigyāna dṛṛha rāma carana ati nēha.

bāyasa tana raghupati bhagati mōhi parama sandēha. 53.

[Uma or Parvati said to Lord Shiva—] ‘I have great doubts that a crow (who is a lowly creature by birth; here referring to Kaagbhusund) could ever be so highly blessed, enlightened and self-realised that he would possess such grand spiritual virtues as ‘Birati’ (or Vairagya; meaning renunciation and detachment from this gross world and having no interest in sense gratifications or desire to enjoy the sense objects of the world), ‘Gyan’ (enlightenment, wisdom, self-realisation), and ‘Vigyan’ (knowledge of the ‘Truth’ arrived at by analysis and research), alongside having firm and unwavering affection and devotion for the holy feet of Lord Ram.

Simultaneously having a physical body of a ‘crow’ and profound and the most refined form of ‘Bhakti’ (devotion) for Lord Raghupati (Ram) is strange and baffling for me, its something of a mystery for me, for such a thing to actually happen is unimaginable for my mind. [So, oh Lord, I request you to clarify the thing and remove my doubts.]¹ (Doha no. 53)

[Note—¹A crow is a meat-eating and dull-witted bird that is regarded as unholy and shunned by all. It’s a lowly birth for a creature and is regarded with contempt. Refer:

Ram Charit Manas, (i) Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 5; and (ii) Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-7 that precedes Doha no. 1 which say that a crow is a despicable creature.]

चौ०. नर सहस्र महँ सुनहु पुरारी । कोउ एक होइ धर्म ब्रतधारी ॥ १ ॥
 धर्मसील कोटिक महँ कोई । बिषय बिमुख बिराग रत होई ॥ २ ॥
 caupāī.

nara sahasra maham̐ sunahu purārī. kō'u ēka hō'i dharma bratadhārī. 1.
 dharmasīla kōṭika maham̐ kō'ī. biṣaya bimukha birāga rata hō'ī. 2.

{In these verse nos. 1-8, Parvati states the reason why she was so astonished that Kaagbhūsund, though being a crow by birth, was so lucky as to be blessed with the spiritual nectar of having devotion ('Bhakti') for Lord Ram, who was an incarnation of the Supreme Lord of creation, because this was a rarest of rare privilege which even the great sages and seers were denied. Therefore, it was very difficult to imagine that a lowly creature such as a crow would be lucky enough not only to have access to this spiritual nectar but also being so erudite and expert in spiritual matters that his narration of the story of Lord Ram had extremely enchanted Lord Shiva who himself is highly enlightened, wise, a great devotee of Lord Ram, and the greatest of all the Gods.}

Parvati said to Lord Shiva, who is also known by the name of 'Purari'—'Listen Lord Purari¹! Amongst thousands of men, there are only a scarce few who follow and uphold the principles of 'Dharma' (i.e. who lead a life of piety marked by righteousness, probity, propriety, ethical behaviour, nobility of thoughts and conduct). (1)

Among ten million living beings, there may be only one who restrains himself from indulgences in the pleasures of the sense objects of the world, who restrains his sense organs from seeking gratification, and who, therefore, is blessed with the grand virtue of renunciation, dispassion and detachment in a natural way². (2)

[Note—¹Lord Shiva is known as "Purari" because he had slayed the demon named Tripura.

²In other words, it is very rare to have a natural sense of detachment from all attractions of this material world of sense objects; it is very difficult to develop a natural sense of total renunciation from all attachments with the world and abstain from seeking pleasures of the senses. It is extremely difficult to overcome the desire for self-gratification and seeking comfort for the sense organs from their respective objects in this material world. It is almost impossible to resist worldly temptations, and a desire for gratification and seeking pleasures. One may do so under religious compulsions or due to circumstances forced upon him, but to have these grand virtues of total and purest form of renunciation, detachment and dispassion in a 'natural way' is almost unimaginable for a living being who is naturally inclined to yield to the irresistible urge to serve his sense organs.]

कोटि बिरक्त मध्य श्रुति कहई । सझक ग्यान सकृत कोउ लहई ॥ ३ ॥
ग्यानवंत कोटिक महँ कोऊ । जीवनमुक्त सकृत जग सोऊ ॥ ४ ॥

kōṭi birakta madhya śruti kaha'ī. samyaka gyāna sakṛta kō'u laha'ī. 3.
gyānavanta kōṭika maham' kō'ū. jīvanamukta sakṛta jaga sō'ū. 4.

The Vedas assert that among crores (ten million) of souls who have freed themselves from worldly attachments (i.e. have renounced the world of material comforts and pleasures), there are only a few fortunate (or privileged, lucky) ones who have acquired wholesome and perfect spiritual wisdom. (3)

Amongst such millions of wise and enlightened souls, only a rare few are so lucky that they have attained 'Jivan Mukti' (or final freedom from all bondages and fetters that have tied their souls to this world and the body) even while they are alive¹. (4)

[Note—¹Such rewards of bliss, beatitude and felicity are usually got by a wise and enlightened person after his Atma, his soul, leaves the gross body at the time of his death. Such persons do find eternal peace and beatitude—but it is after they abandon their gross body and the gross world in which they live. But in some rare cases this becomes possible even while a person lives in this world, retains his body, and goes about his normal duties. Such persons are known as 'Jivan Mukta'—i.e. they have attained spiritual freedom and liberation from all fetters that bind the soul to the body as well as the world even while they are alive and live a normal life like other creatures.

Mukti literally means freedom, liberation and deliverance. A related concept is Moksha which would mean ultimate emancipation and salvation. Both concepts are almost identical in import vis-à-vis the creature's Atma is concerned. Mukti in the present context would mean freedom from delusions and ignorance about the truth that tie down the creature to this entrapping world and its attractions of material objects; to obtain liberation from the fetters of delusions and ignorance and thereby obtain deliverance from the endless cycle of birth and death and their attendant miseries and torments. The creature erroneously thinks that the pleasures and comforts that the world gives are permanent and real, whereas the fact is just the opposite. This is the great delusion pertaining to this world which keeps everyone tied down to it. Once Gyan or truthful knowledge dawns on the mental horizon of the creature that he is being taken for a ride, either by becoming aware of this fact through the reading of the scriptures or by hearing about it when spoken of by some wise man, it is then that he embarks on the path of finding the truth himself and the way to break free from this shackle. The scriptures and other wise men show him the path, and finally he is successful in his spiritual quest. This is Mukti.

Basically there are said to be three types of Muktis—viz. Jivan, Videha and Kaivalya. The following list summarises the Upanishads that deal with these three varieties of Muktis.

(1) Jivan Mukti—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda tradition—Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 18-33; Yog Kundali Upanishad, Canto 3; Katho-panishad, Canto 2, Valli 2, verse no. 12-13, and Canto 2, Valli 3, verse no. 4, 6-15; Akchu-panishad, verse no. 32-39; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 1-32. (b) Shukla Yajur Veda

tradition—Paingalo-panishad, canto 3, verse no. 5, and canto 3, verse no.9-11; Mandal Brahmin Upanishad, 1/4/3-4; 2/3/6-7; 2/4/5-6; Adhyatma Upanishad, verse nos. 12 and 4-47; Muktika-panishad, Canto 2. (c) Atharva Veda—Ram Rahasaya Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 11-17; Annapurna Upanishad, canto 2.

(2) Videha Mukti—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda tradition—Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 33-81; Sarwasaro-panishad, verse no. 2; Akchu Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 32-40. (b) Shukla Yajur Veda tradition—Paingalo-panishad, canto 3, verse no. 12, and Canto 4, verse nos. 7 and 15; Mahopanishad, canto 2, verse nos. 36-73, and canto 5, verse nos. 23-41.

(3) Kaivalya Mukti—It has been described in Paingalo-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, in its Canto 4, verse nos. 7 and 15.

(4) The three paths of Mukti have been described in Advai Tarak Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse nos. 4-13.

A similar idea has been expressed by Lord Ram when he advised the saintly crow Kaagbhusund about the characteristics of those whom the Lord loves—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-7 that precedes Doha no. 86 which we will eventually read as we progress with the reading of this excellent book titled the “Kaagbhusund Ramayan”.]

तिन्ह सहस्र महँ सब सुख खानी । दुर्लभ ब्रह्मलीन बिग्यानी ॥ ५ ॥

धर्मसील बिरक्त अरु ग्यानी । जीवनमुक्त ब्रह्मपर प्राणी ॥ ६ ॥

सब ते सो दुर्लभ सुरराया । राम भगति रत गत मद माया ॥ ७ ॥

सो हरिभगति काग किमि पाई । बिस्वनाथ मोहि कहहु बुझाई ॥ ८ ॥

tinha sahasra mahum̐ saba sukha khānī. durlabha brahmalīna bigyānī. 5.
dharmasīla birakta aru gyānī. jīvanamukta brahmapara prānī. 6.
saba tē sō durlabha surarāyā. rāma bhagati rata gata mada māyā. 7.
sō haribhagati kāga kimi pāī. bisvanātha mōhi kahahu bujhāī. 8.

Amongst such thousands of souls (as described in the foregoing verses), it is very rare to find a really wise and enlightened person who has attained self-realisation of the highest and purest form so much so that he not only realised (i.e. been acquainted with the reality of) Brahm (the Supreme Being) but has simultaneously merged his own ‘self’ with the ‘supreme Self’ that is the Absolute Reality of creation (and is known as ‘Brahm’). Such a person indeed becomes a treasury of all imaginable form of bliss, joy, beatitude and felicity¹. (5)

Now, even amongst those living beings who are (i) the followers of the principles of Dharma (righteousness, probity, propriety, nobility of conduct and thought), (ii) those who have totally renounced the world and are detached from its materialistic charms, and are therefore known as ‘Virakta’, (iii) those who are wise and enlightened, and are thus honoured by the epithet of being a ‘Gyani’, (iv) those who are called ‘Jivan Mukta’ because they have freed themselves from all the fetters of the body and the world, and (v) those who have realised Brahm and have become truly ‘self-realised’ by merging their Atma with Brahm {as outlined in the foregoing verse nos. 1-5} (6)---

---Oh the Lord of the Gods (i.e. Lord Shiva)², it is rare and very difficult to find a person who is absolutely devoted to Lord Ram and committed to him, and is free from all the corrupting influences of such vices as vanity and wile represented by 'Maya' (delusions) and 'Mada' (ego, arrogance and haughtiness)³. (7)

[Parvati finally comes to the point. She expresses her surprise that a humble creature such as a crow named Kaagbhusund would be able to acquire this rarest of rare blessing of having 'Bhakti' or devotion for Lord Ram when this virtue is so rare and difficult to develop even by those who are highly enlightened and wise as she outlines herself in the foregoing verse nos. 1-7.]

Well then, oh the Lord of the world ("Vishwanaath"), please explain to me how did a humble crow (Kaagbhusund) have access to the rarest of rare spiritual virtue of having Bhakti for Lord Ram (when it is so difficult for even those who are highly wise and enlightened—or 'Gyanis', are 'self-and-Brahm-realised', and are 'Jivan Mukta')⁴. (8)

[Note—¹The inference is easy: it is not so difficult to acquire a theoretical knowledge of the Atma or soul, of who one's 'true self' is, and to become wise and enlightened. But it is more difficult to actually become 'self-realised' in the true sense—because once this materialises, one would immediately realise that his 'true self' is nothing else but Brahm, the supreme Self or the cosmic Consciousness which is the Soul of the entire living creation. With this realisation, the differentiation between the individual soul and the universal Soul vanishes. This means that the individual transcends the limitations imposed by the grossness of the body and the world to rise above and become a cosmic entity like the Brahm, or the supreme Atma or the supreme Consciousness.

When this becomes a reality, the living being becomes a treasury of eternal bliss, beatitude and felicity that are the hall-marks of those who have realised their 'true self' as being Brahm, and not an individual who has a gross body affected by the countless problems of the equally gross world. Obviously, when all worrisome distractions are removed, when all the nagging problems associated with the body and the world in which this body lives are eliminated, happiness and joy comes naturally in abundance.

²We must remember that these verses refer to the conversation between Parvati and Lord Shiva. Parvati is here addressing her husband Lord Shiva when she says "Oh Lord of the Gods".

³When one has acquired all the excellent qualities enumerated in the above verses, it is normal for a person to feel a sense of pride and achievement. He feels that he is a cut above the others; that is is a learned, a wise and enlightened man whom others show respect, and who is much sought after for spiritual guidance and advice on matters related to spiritualism and metaphysics as enunciated in the scriptures. Such persons think that they know all, and that there is no need for them to search anything more or anything else.

But they forget that though they might have attained bliss and happiness that comes with Brahm-realisation they have yet not tasted the nectar of spiritual bliss, exhilaration and ecstasy that comes with having the eclectic virtue of 'Bhakti' or having devotion and love for the Lord God. In their misplaced sense of fulfillment, they forget that they still lack something, that they are missing the essence of bliss,

beatitude and felicity that they can have if they develop devotion for Lord Ram (the Lord God) in addition to their knowledge of Brahm.

Bhakti or devotion for Lord Ram, the incarnate Brahm, is an added bonus that can be had for free, and which is like the tiara on the crown of spiritual wisdom and enlightenment.

Remember: We are talking about those persons who claim to have attained 'Brahm' and 'Jivan Mukti', and thus assert that they have obtained spiritual bliss. But if such persons have not developed 'Bhakti' for the living form of the same Brahm whom they claim to have realised, the form known as 'Lord Ram', then such persons are surely incomplete in their knowledge.

Thus, they cannot claim to be truly Brahm-realised or thoroughly enjoy the spiritual reward of bliss, beatitude and felicity. Without Bhakti for Lord Ram, the incarnate Brahm, something is missing from the whole.

⁴This group of verses highlight the superiority of having devotion—or Bhakti—for Lord Ram.

'Bhakti' is superior to the other five excellent qualities of a man: to follow Dharma (verse no. 1), to have Vairagya (verse no. 2), to possess Gyan (verse no. 3), to attain Jivan Mukti (verse no. 4), and obtain Brahm-realisation and oneness with Brahm, the Absolute (verse no. 5).

A similar doubt was raised by Garud, the mount of Lord Vishnu and the legendary Eagle, when he came to Kaagbhusund to hear the recitation of Ram Charit Manas—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 94.

It ought to be noted here that the saintly crow Kaagbhusund had been blessed with the eclectic virtue of having Bhakti for Lord Ram from two sources: viz. (i) Lord Shiva himself—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 30, and (ii) Kaagbhusund's Guru (preceptor) named sage Lomas—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 113.]

दो०. राम परायन ग्यान रत गुनागार मति धीर ।

नाथ कहहु केहि कारन पायउ काक सरीर ॥ ५४ ॥

dōhā.

rāma parāyana gyāna rata gunāgāra mati dhīra.
nātha kahahu kēhi kārana pāya'u kāka sarīra. 54.

He (the saintly crow Kaagbhusund) was an ardent devotee of Lord Ram and had committed his entire life to the Lord, was well-steeped in wisdom, was a treasury of knowledge, was highly enlightened, and was of a steady and resolute mind.

This being so, how come did he become a lowly creature such as a 'crow'; why did he get a lowly body of a crow (instead of being born as some higher member in the hierarchy of creation, such as a human being for example)? (Doha no. 54)

[Note—Garud has also raised this question when he went to hear the recitation of Ram Charit Manas from Kaagbhusund—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 94.

At that time, Kaagbhusund narrated to Garud the events of his past life which had resulted in his acquiring the body of a humble crow.

When asked by Garud why he loved this body of a crow, Kaagbhusund replied that it is because he had acquired Bhakti for Lord Ram with this body, and so he loved it more than any other form that his soul might have taken—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 95.]

चौ०. यह प्रभु चरित पवित्र सुहावा । कहहु कृपाल काग कहँ पावा ॥ १ ॥

तुम्ह केहि भौंति सुना मदनारी । कहहु मोहि अति कौतुक भारी ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

yaha prabhu carita pavitra suhāvā. kahahu krpāla kāga kham' pāvā. 1.
tumha kēhi bhām'ti sunā madanārī. kahahu mōhi ati kautuka bhārī. 2.

Oh merciful Lord! Tell me from where did the crow (Kaagbhusund) get (i.e. have access to) this divine, sacred, fascinating and delightful story (of Lord Ram)¹? (1)

Further, oh the vanquisher of Kaamdeo², please tell me from where have you heard this wonderful story³? These questions have intrigued me, and I am very eager to know about the details. (2)

[Note—¹Parvati was surprised that Lord Ram's divine story, the glory and sacredness of which Lord Shiva never tires of praising as is evident in verse nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 52 hereinabove, could be known and fully understood by a 'crow' who is supposed to be lowly bird in the hierarchy of creation. It was very intriguing because even great sages and seers found it difficult to understand the great secrets of the divine story of Lord Ram, complete with its intricate details, many variations, subtle messages and finer nuances. So how was it possible that a humble creature known as a 'crow' could become so enlightened about this story that even Lord Shiva was charmed by the former's narration of it, had spent time hearing it in his hermitage, and had been exceptionally pleased (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 57 along with its preceding Chaupai line no. 10).

The "Kaagbhusund Ramayan" was revealed as an answer that Lord Shiva gave to Parvati.

Parvati knew very well that Lord Shiva was deeply steeped in the knowledge of who Lord Ram was, and that he had always meditated by using Lord Ram's holy Mantras and had focused his attention on the divine form of the Lord. She was a witness to it: she had been with Shiva when he stayed at the hermitage of sage Kumbhaj where the divine story of Lord Ram was narrated and thoroughly discussed with its manifold meanings, and then she had witnessed how Shiva had bowed reverentially and paid his obeisance to Lord Ram while the former was on his way to his abode in Mt. Kailash in the company of Parvati, and Lord Ram was wandering in the wilderness in search of his wife Sita who was abducted by the demon king Ravana—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 48—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 50.

At that time also Parvati was confused, and this had led to some unhappy events that culminated in Shiva forsaking her—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand,

from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 50—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 57.

As it happened, in her next birth she asked Shiva to tell her the secret of Lord Ram's divinity, and the story that Shiva told her came to be known as the famous epic "Ram Charit Manas" or the 'Ramayana'. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 107—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 113.

So, Parvati was finally convinced of the divine and sacred nature of Lord Ram's story. But what confounded her was Lord Shiva picking up the crow named Kaagbhusund for so much lavish praise. She wondered how this was possible that a crow, of all the creatures, would be so highly enlightened and knowledgeable about Lord Ram's story that Shiva, who is regarded as the wisest amongst the gods, would hold him in such high esteem.

She could not contain her inquisitiveness and asked Shiva to clarify.

²Lord Shiva had once burnt to death the god of passion, known as Kaamdeo (or Cupid), because the latter had attempted to disturb the Lord's meditation at the behest of the other gods who had wanted to get Shiva married.

The word 'madanārī' in the text literally means one who destroyed the pride of Madan, another name of Kaamdeo, who was very proud of his ability to overcome a living being's determination to practice self-restraint over his sense organs and desires for gratification by stoking the fire of passion, lust and desire that are inherently present in the heart of all creatures in this creation. He had tried his dirty tricks on Lord Shiva while he was deeply engrossed in meditation, and this had extremely annoyed the Lord so much so that the latter opened his third eye said to be located on his forehead. This eye spewed blazing flames of fire symbolising Shiva's wrath, and Kaamdeo was reduced to ashes.

Since then, Shiva has got another name, 'madanārī': one who vanquished the pride of Madan, the god of passion and lust. This story has been narrated in detail in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 82—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 87.

³Parvati wondered two points: (i) One was from where her husband had heard this magnificent story of Lord Ram. Well, in her ignorance she forgot that she had accompanied him to the hermitage of sage Kumbhaj (Agastya) where this story was thoroughly discussed (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 48).

(ii) The other point was: 'what were the circumstances which led Shiva to hear the story from Kaagbhusund, and what was so special with this story that he was so fascinated by it'? This is answered by Shiva in the verses that follow (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 55—to Doha no. 57).]

गरुड़ महाग्यानी गुन रासी । हरि सेवक अति निकट निवासी ॥ ३ ॥

तेहिं केहि हेतु काग सन जाई । सुनी कथा मुनि निकर बिहाई ॥ ४ ॥

garuṛa mahāgyānī guṇa rāsī. hari sēvaka ati nikaṭa nivāsī. 3.
tēhim kēhi hētu kāga sana jāī. sunī kathā muni nikara bihāī. 4.

Garud, the legendary vehicle of Lord Vishnu, is a savant, a highly enlightened and learned one who is also a repository of all the good virtues. [How can one be sure of this? What is the reason for it? Well, it is because—] He is a servant of Lord Hari (i.e. Lord Vishnu), and lives very close to the Lord (as Garud is a vehicle of Lord Hari, and must be available to the Lord at short notice)¹. (3)

This being the case, how come he (Garud) would prefer to go to a crow's place to hear the narration of the divine story of Lord Ram instead of going to the hermitage of some wise and learned sage or seer?

[It's amazing that Garud should choose to go to a crow to listen to the story of Lord Ram instead of picking some great saint or sage for this purpose. And, by all accounts, Garud was not a fool; he was very wise. So why did he prefer going to the crow Kaagbhusund's place to hear Lord Ram's story? I (Parvati) am unable to understand this mystery. So oh Lord, please explain it to me.] (4)

[Note—¹The simple logic is this: Had Garud not been exceptionally pure at heart, wise, enlightened, sincere and diligently devoted to Lord Hari, it would not have been possible for him to be in the Lord's service in the first place. To be very close and dear to Lord Vishnu so much so that Vishnu depended on him for going anywhere is a rare privilege that wouldn't have been available to Garud if he hadn't possessed excellent qualities. Lord Vishnu wouldn't have liked an unqualified creature to live so near and serve him so closely.

Garud is the mount or the vehicle of Lord Narayan or Vishnu. The word "Garud" means 'one who flies with the help of wings'.

He is in the form of the legendary bird in the form of an Eagle or Heron. Garud stands for many things—such as speed and agility of the mind to move from one subject to another. Garud also symbolizes the spoken word. This is because spoken words are transmitted from one point to another by the medium of the sky just like the bird flying from one tree to another. Words and ideas are transmitted from one person to the other like the bird flying off from one tree and perching on another. That is why speech is likened to a bird. Garud is regarded as a personification of the knowledge contained in the Vedas because this knowledge is transmitted through the means of speech. Besides this point, there is another way of looking at this aspect. The knowledge contained in the Vedas help a wise man to reach his spiritual destination much like Lord Vishnu employing the services of Garud if he wants to go any place. The eagle is known to have a long range of vision and flies high up in the sky. The Garud is able to have a broad perspective of the sight seen below because from its high perch in the sky. This indicates the virtues of Vishnu in having wider knowledge and broad vision of life as well as to remain aloof from the humdrum affairs of the deluding world below. The Garud is extremely fast and reaches its destination in a fraction of a second—indicating the almost instantaneous reach of the Lord in all the directions of the creation. Since the Gurud is able to fly it also stands for the imaginative abilities of the mind, and since it has a penetrating vision that sees long distances he stands for the sharp and wise intellect that has foresight and deep insight.

According to *Krishna Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 24, Garud took up the form of the Indian Fig tree (known as Bhandir) during Lord Vishnu's incarnation as Krishna.

There is an Upanishad of the Atharva Veda that is dedicated to Lord Garud. It is called the *Garud Upanishad* and it is 31st Upanishad of this Veda. It has the Mantras of Garud which are said to possess great powers to overcome the killer effects of any kind of poison, especially those of snake bite.

The legend of Garud can be traced to the *Rig Veda*, 4.26-27, that says that a golden-winged huge eagle had brought the Soma (the juice of eternity and bliss) from the heaven.

According to the Adi-Parva of the epic '*Mahabharat*', Chapters 31-34, Garud was the son of sage Kashyap, the progenitor of all living beings, and his wife Vinataa. She had become a slave of Kadru, another wife of Kashyap, due to a curse. So Garud liberated his mother Vinataa from this curse by bringing Amrit (nectar of deliverance) from heaven.

According to the story of the *Ramayana*, both the Valmiki version and Goswami Tulsidas' version, Garud came to the battle-field during the epic battle of Lanka when Lord Ram and others had been ensnared by huge serpents that tied them down like long sturdy ropes. These serpents were actually a metamorphosed form of the mysterious weapon known as the 'serpent missile' shot by Meghnad (also known as Indrajit), the son of Ravana, the king of the demons and the ruler of Lanka. Since the eagle is a known enemy of serpents, so as soon as Garud appeared on the battle-field, all the serpents either fled in terror or were gobbled up by Garud. This freed Lord Ram. This was a great service that Garud did for his Lord—because Ram was none else but Lord Vishnu in a human form. Refer: (i) Valmiki Ramayan, Yudha Kand, Chapter 50; and (ii) Tulsidas' Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, from Chaupai line no. 10 that precedes Doha no. 73—to Doha no. 74 ka.

In iconography, he is depicted as a divine human with two outstretched strong wings behind his two arms. When Lord Vishnu rides on the back of Garud like one would ride a horse, Garud holds the feet of the Lord, which dangles on either side of his body, with his hands.

The colour of Garud's body is depicted as white or emerald according to different versions in the scriptures.]

कहहु कवन बिधि भा संबादा । दोउ हरिभगत काग उरगादा ॥ ५ ॥

गौरि गिरा सुनि सरल सुहाई । बोले सिव सादर सुख पाई ॥ ६ ॥

kahahu kavana bidhi bhā sambādā. dō'u haribhagata kāga uragādā. 5.
gauri girā suni sarala suhā'ī. bōlē siva sādara sukha pā'ī. 6.

Tell me about the dialogue that was exchanged between the two devotees of Lord Hari, i.e. the 'crow' (Kaagbhusund) and the 'eagle who devours serpents' (i.e. Garud)¹. (5)

Hearing these words of Gauri (one of the many names of Shiva's wife Parvati), words that were pleasant to hear and expressed her honest desire to learn and know more about Lord Ram and his divinity, Lord Shiva felt pleased and happy².

He (Shiva) said (replied)— (6)

[Note—¹Garud is a devotee of Lord Vishnu, whose other name is Hari. Similarly, Kaagbhusund, the crow, is also a great devotee of Lord Vishnu who had taken a human form of Lord Ram. In other words, the conversation that proceeded between these two great birds must be really interesting as they had a common thread of devotion between them. It is just like two great philosophers, two great musicians, two great scientists, or for that matter any two great souls who are well-established in their own field of knowledge meeting each other. The discussion between any such two persons is sure to be highly enlightening and thought-provoking for all those who are interested in that particular field of study.

Now therefore, since I (Parvati) am eager to learn about the truth of Lord Ram and the greatness of the Lord, since I am fascinated by your (Shiva's) own devotion and dedication for Lord Ram and the sacred story of the Lord you have narrated to me, and especially the way you have praised Kaagbhusund and have said that Garud, who was highly enlightened and very close to Lord Vishnu but had been overcome with delusions, found his peace when he went to hear the discourse about Lord Ram from Kaagbhusund, I am sure that this dialogue between the two great birds, Kaagbhusund and Garud, would be extremely interesting and enlightening. So, I want to hear about it.

What were the circumstances that made Garud deluded, why did he choose to go to Kaagbhusund to clear his doubts, and what did Kaagbhusund tell Garud that removed his delusions and doubts, and regain his peace of mind? I want to hear everything in detail. So please, oh Lord, tell me the entire episode.

²Shiva sensed honesty and sincerity in Parvati's enquiry. There was no deceit in her words. She was curious to know why and how Garud, the wise bird who was very close to Lord Vishnu and thus supposed to be well acquainted with the Lord's greatness, supremacy and divinity, should become doubtful and need advice. And even in case he did, why would he go to a crow to remove his doubts instead of other learned sages and seers.

Shiva could judge Parvati's sincerity by her facial expressions and words, and he was convinced that she had a genuine desire to know the facts and hear the discourse that Kaagbhusund gave for Garud. So he decided to tell her everything as it happened. Otherwise, had he sensed any deceit in her, it is certain he would have said 'no'.]

धन्य सती पावन मति तोरी । रघुपति चरन प्रीति नहिं थोरी ॥ ७ ॥

सुनहु परम पुनीत इतिहासा । जो सुनि सकल लोक भ्रम नासा ॥ ८ ॥

उपजड़ राम चरन बिस्वासा । भव निधि तर नर बिनहिं प्रयासा ॥ ९ ॥

dhan'ya satī pāvana mati tōrī. raghupati carana prīti nahim thōrī. 7.

sunahu parama punīta itihāsā. jō suni sakala lōka bhrama nāsā. 8.

upaja'i rāma carana bisvāsā. bhava nidhi tara nara binahim prayāsā. 9.

[Being glad at Parvati's enquiry as it would give him another opportunity to narrate the divine and sacred story of his beloved Lord Sri Ram, something that gladdened his heart more than anything else, Shiva said cheerfully—]

‘Sati, you be blessed! You are really fortunate to have a purified mind that has enabled you to have the eclectic virtues of devotion, affection and love for the holy feet of Lord Raghupati (Ram, the Lord of the Raghu dynasty, the Supreme Lord of creation in a human form) that is not little. [That is, your affection and devotion for the holy feet of the Lord is not at all less than what I expected from you. You are blessed as you have an abundance of these spiritual virtues in you, and so you are a fit person to whom this marvellous story can be told. I am very happy at this!]¹ (7)

So, listen to this holiest of holy and most sacred history (“*itihāsa*”) (known as Ram Charit Manas or the Ramayana), hearing which the entire web of one’s worldly delusions and misconceptions (about the Supreme Lord’s human form) are eliminated². (8)

As a result of hearing of this sacred story, faith and trust in the holy feet of Lord Ram is kindled in one’s heart, and this helps a man (i.e. all persons, irrespective of gender, caste and creed) to cross this huge ocean-like world very easily and without making any special effort for it³. (9)

[Note—¹It has been said that the sacred story of Lord Ram should not be told to someone who is not interested to hear it or who dislikes it in any manner. It is not meant for the undeserving, or for the uninterested. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (i) Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 38—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 39; and (ii) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-5 that precede Doha no. 128.

²Well, Parvati’s mind was earlier infected by this delusion. That was the primary reason why Lord Shiva had abandoned her in her previous birth as Sati (refer—Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 48—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 57).

So, Shiva alludes to this phase of her life. He means to say that one of the reasons why he would repeat the story once again is that it would help to scrub clean any trace of negativity or delusions that may still linger on in Parvati’s mind. This would ensure that the cleansing is complete and final.

³This mortal, gross world consisting of an endless cycle of birth and death with its accompanying horrors and uncertainties is compared to an ocean because they are similar in nature in a metaphoric way. The roaring ocean with its huge life-threatening waves, its churning whirlpools of death, its ferocious marine creatures that can kill and devour anyone whom they manage to lay their hands upon and grab, and its seemingly endless expanse that one feels one would never cross to find the other side of its shore, is as fearsome and horrifying as the mortal world with its grinding cycle of horrifying miseries and an endless chain symbolising birth and death.

So how does one cross an ocean? Surely ‘on a sturdy boat or ship’ that has an expert navigator. Likewise, Lord Ram’s divine story acts as a time-tested ship that helps a person to find deliverance from this world and have eternal peace; it helps the soul reach its destination easily and with the least trouble. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 53 which is explicit on this subject.

The glories of Lord Ram’s story and its potential to give liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation to the soul have been described in Ram

Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 31—to Doha no. 32.]

दो०. ऐसिअ प्रस्न बिहंगपति कीन्हि काग सन जाइ ।
सो सब सादर कहिहउँ सुनहु उमा मन लाइ ॥ ५५ ॥

dōhā.

aisi'a prasna bihaṅgapati kīnhi kāga sana jā'i.
sō saba sādara kahiha'um' sunahu umā mana lā'i. 55.

A similar enquiry was made by the king of birds (i.e. Garud) when he went to the crow (Kaagbhusund)¹. I (Shiva) shall tell you (Parvati, also known as Uma) that episode with due respect².

Oh Uma, listen attentively. (Doha no. 55)

[Note—¹What was this 'similar enquiry'? Just like Parvati being astonished that a humble crow could be so blessed that he was chosen by Lord Shiva for lavishing of so much praise because of his ability to describe the sacred story of Lord Ram that was so exceptionally charming that it had enamoured even Shiva's heart and mind, Garud had also wondered how come a lowly bird such as a crow could be so highly enlightened, self-realised and learned that Lord Shiva would advise him (Garud) to go to this crow, instead of any other great sage and seer, to remove his grave doubts and overcome his delusions about the authenticity of Lord Ram. Refer—Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 94 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 3-8.

Surely there was something special about the crow known by the name of Kaagbhusund. More than the desire to hear the divine story of Lord Ram being narrated, it was the desire to unravel the mystery of Kaagbhusund that Garud had stayed on in the former's hermitage after hearing the story of Lord Ram so that he could enquire about Kaagbhusund's personal life.

It should be noted that Garud has acknowledged that all his doubts had been removed after coming to Kaagbhusund's hermitage and hearing the story of Lord Ram from him (refer—Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Doha no. 68 ka; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 93; and (iii) Doha no. 94 kha).

Likewise, Parvati was also amazed by Kaagbhusund as is clear in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 55.

²Shiva is about to re-tell the divine story of his beloved Lord Ram, and so it is something sacred that he will speak of. Therefore he tells Parvati that what he is about to narrate is done with reverence and due respect. This mark of respect is as much for the story of Lord Ram as it is for the narrator, sage Kaagbhusund, the crow, from whom he (Shiva) had heard the story himself.

Why do we conclude that Shiva 're-told this story'? Because he has already narrated the entire story to Parvati once as is clear from Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1, 6-7 that precede Doha no. 52. So, when Parvati asked Shiva some questions pertaining to the discussion between Garud and Kaagbhusund, Shiva decided to 're-tell' the story to her to satisfy her query and remove all remaining traces of doubts from her mind.]

चौ०. मैं जिमि कथा सुनी भव मोचनि । सो प्रसंग सुनु सुमुखि सुलोचनि ॥ १ ॥
caupāī.

mairṁ jimi kathā sunī bhava mōcani. sō prasaṅga sunu sumukhi sulōcani. 1.

Lord Shiva replied—‘Oh my dear (Parvati or Uma) who has a lovely face and enchanting eyes! Now I shall tell you the episode when I came to hear this story (of Lord Ram), a divine story which has the mystical potential to destroy the trap created by this world of misery and delusions (thereby granting both mental as well as spiritual happiness, peace and bliss to the listener). (1)

प्रथम दच्छ गृह तव अवतारा । सती नाम तब रहा तुम्हारा ॥ २ ॥
दच्छ जग्य तव भा अपमाना । तुम्ह अति क्रोध तजे तब प्राणा ॥ ३ ॥
मम अनुचरन्ह कीन्ह मख भंगा । जानहु तुम्ह सो सकल प्रसंगा ॥ ४ ॥

prathama daccha gr̥ha tava avatārā. satī nāma taba rahā tumhārā. 2.
daccha jagya tava bhā apamānā. tumha ati krōdha tajē taba prānā. 3.
mama anucaranha kīnha makha bhaṅgā. jānahu tumha sō sakala prasaṅgā.
4.

In your first life (or birth), you had been born as the daughter of Daksha Prajapati. At that time your name was “Sati”. (2)

In the religious sacrifice of Daksha, you had been insulted, which made you peeved and very angry. Unable to bear the insult, you had discarded your life (i.e. had died by burning yourself in fire). (3)

(When I came to learn about it, I was infuriated, and—) My followers went and destroyed the sacrifice to punish the perpetrators of your insult. This story is well known to you.¹ (4)

[Note—¹This entire episode is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 63—to Chauapi line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 65.]

तब अति सोच भयउ मन मोरें । दुखी भयउँ बियोग प्रिय तोरें ॥ ५ ॥
सुंदर बन गिरि सरित तड़ागा । कौतुक देखत फिरउँ बेरागा ॥ ६ ॥

taba ati sōca bhaya'u mana mōrēm. dukhī bhaya'um' biyōga priya tōrēm. 5.
sundara bana giri sarita tarāgā. kautuka dēkhata phira'um' bēragā. 6.

I was very sad and remorseful at this unfortunate development. Oh dear, I was miserable due the grief of separation from you¹. (5)

In order to pass my time and find mental peace, I used to wonder here and there like a detached mendicant. I used to roam, watching beautiful forests, mountains, rivers and lakes. (6)

[Note—¹When Sati died, Lord Shiva was overwhelmed with grief. The reason for this sadness of his heart is given in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 77 which says to the effect that “though Lord Shiva is inherently dispassionate and detached, yet he was full of remorse (when Sati died) because one of his devotees, in this case his consort Sati, had suffered due to his separation from her, and had also died due to an insult inflicted on the Lord by her father”.

Shiva had earlier voluntarily decided that he will have nothing to do with Sati, will have no contact with her because she had assumed the form of Sita, the wife of Lord Ram whom Shiva worships. It was an unethical action on the part of Sati, something Shiva could not forgive. So, soon after Sati assumed the form of Sita, Lord Shiva mentally abandoned her. Sati could feel the indifference that her husband Shiva had developed towards her. This pained her much. She thought to herself, ‘I am sincerely sorry for my stupid actions. But that does not mean I do not love Shiva. I can’t live without him. Oh Lord God—please let me die. And if I am honestly devoted to Lord Shiva then please bless me that in my new birth I may serve my dear Lord once again.’ Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Doha no. 59 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it, and Chaupai line no. 1 that follow this Doha; and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 65.

So, in the current verses Lord Shiva addresses this secret thought in her mind—whether or not he loved Uma inspite of her sins in the past life. Shiva wished to convey the message to her that in the intervening period from her death and her reunion with him, he had been very sad and had been remembering her all the time. It was to overcome his grief that he wondered from place to place.]

गिरि सुमेर उत्तर दिसि दूरी । नील सैल एक सुंदर भूरी ॥ ७ ॥
तासु कनकमय सिखर सुहाए । चारि चारु मोरे मन भाए ॥ ८ ॥
तिन्ह पर एक एक बिटप बिसाला । बट पीपर पाकरी रसाला ॥ ९ ॥
सैलोपरि सर सुंदर सोहा । मनि सोपान देखि मन मोहा ॥ १० ॥

giri sumēra uttara disi dūrī. nīla saila ēka sundara bhūrī. 7.
tāsu kanakamaya sikhara suhā'ē. cāri cāru mōrē mana bhā'ē. 8.
tinha para ēka ēka biṭapa bisālā. baṭa pīpara pākārī rasālā. 9.
sailōpari sara sundara sōhā. mani sōpāna dēkhi mana mōhā. 10.

During one of those wonderings I reached a beautiful mountain that had a blue hue. It is called “Neel Giri” (the Blue Mountain), and it is situated further north from Mt. Sumeru (which is golden in its hue and is said to be the terrestrial abode of gods). (7)

The Neel Giri had four beautiful and simmering golden summits. It looked very charming and pleased my mind. [Since I was in search of peace, this attractive site lured me and I went there.] (8)

Each of these summits had one huge tree each, viz. a Vat tree (the banyan tree), a Pipar tree (the bo-tree; the long-pepper tree), a Paakar tree (the Indian fig tree), and a Rasaal tree (the mango tree). (9)

A wonderful lake too existed on the top of the mountain. It had gem-studded steps. This composite sight enthralled my mind and gladdened my heart (and I decided to spend some time there). (10)

दो०. सीतल अमल मधुर जल जलज बिपुल बहुरंग ।
कूजत कल रव हंस गन गुंजत मंजुल भृंग ॥ ५६ ॥

dōhā.

sītala amala madhura jala jalaja bipula bahuraṅga.
kūjata kala rava hansa gana guṅjata maṅjula bhṛṅga. 56.

That lake had clean, cool and sweet water. There were plentiful flowers, especially the lotus flower, of different colours that bloomed in and around it.

There was a lot of pleasant noise made by beautiful swans (that floated majestically on its water) murmuring sweetly, as well as by the bees that hummed melodiously over the flowers. (Doha no. 56)

चौ०. तेहिं गिरि रुचिर बसइ खग सोई । तासु नास कल्पांत न होई ॥ १ ॥
caupāī.

tēhiṁ giri rucira basa'i khaga sōī. tāsu nāsa kalpānta na hōī. 1.

On (the top of) that charming mountain lived the “Bird” (a reference to the saintly crow named Kaagbhusund) who will not perish (die) even when the Kalpa (i.e. one cycle of creation) comes to an end. [That is, Kaagbhusund is immortal like the gods.]¹ (1)

[¹Lord Ram had himself blessed Kaagbhusund with eternity in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 88.

Refer also to Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 94; and (ii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 96.]

माया कृत गुन दोष अनेका । मोह मनोज आदि अबिबेका ॥ २ ॥
रहे व्यापि समस्त जग माहीं । तेहि गिरि निकट कबहुँ नहिं जाहीं ॥ ३ ॥

māyā kṛta guna dōṣa anēkā. mōha manōja ādi abibēkā. 2.
rahē byāpi samasta jaga māhīm. tēhi giri nikaṭa kabahum' nahīm jāhīm. 3.

All the countless types of faults, taints and shortcomings that are created by ‘Maya’ (delusions) and are closely associated with this mundane and mortal world, such as

‘Moha’ (attractions and attachments for the world and its material objects), ‘Manoj’ (passions and lust) etc.--- (2)

---All such faults have spread throughout this world, but they never go near this holy mountain. [It is out of bounds for them. So therefore, the atmosphere of the place was exemplarily holy, spiritual and blissful.] (3)

तहँ बसि हरिहि भजइ जिमि कागा । सो सुनु उमा सहित अनुरागा ॥ ४ ॥
 पीपर तरु तर ध्यान सो धरई । जाप जग्य पाकरि तर करई ॥ ५ ॥
 आँब छाँह कर मानस पूजा । तजि हरि भजनु काजु नहिं दूजा ॥ ६ ॥
 बर तर कह हरि कथा प्रसंगा । आवहिं सुनहिं अनेक बिहंगा ॥ ७ ॥

taham̃ basi harihi bhaja'i jimi kāgā. sō sunu umā sahita anurāgā. 4.
 pīpara taru tara dhyāna sō dhara'ī. jāpa jagya pākari tara kara'ī. 5.
 āmba chām̃ha kara mānasa pūjā. taji hari bhajanu kāju nahim̃ dūjā. 6.
 bara tara kaha hari kathā prasaṅgā. āvahim̃ sunahim̃ anēka bihaṅgā. 7.

Now I shall describe to you how the Crow (Kaagbhusund) lived and worshipped Lord Hari (Vishnu) there. Uma, listen to it attentively and with great reverence (because it is about a holy soul and a holy place). (4)

He used to do ‘Dhyan’ (meditation, reflection and contemplation) under the shadow of the Pipar tree (the bo-tree; the long-pepper tree). Under the Paakar tree (the Indian fig tree), he used to do Japa (repetition of holy name of the Lord God) and Yagya (fire sacrifices). (5)

In the shadow of the mango tree he used to worship ‘Manas’, the holy book that describes the divine story of Lord Ram (who was an incarnation of the Supreme Lord on earth in the form of a human). Excepting worshipping Lord Hari and spending his time in devotion for the Lord, he had no other thing to do. [To wit, Kaagbhusund spent his time entirely on Lord Hari, remembering him and doing his service. He was totally devoted to the remembrance of the Lord.] (6)

Under the shadow of the Vat tree (the banyan tree), he used to regularly tell the divine stories related to Lord Hari¹. Many birds came there to hear him. (7)

[Note—¹The word “Hari” here clearly refers to Lord Ram because it is said in verse no. 6 that Kaagbhusund used to worship the holy book called “Manas” under the mango tree. This “Manas” is the book that describes the life and deeds of Lord Ram. In fact, both the terms “Hari” and “Ram” refer to the same Lord Vishnu because Ram was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, and Hari is one of the many names of Vishnu.

This conclusion is endorsed by the next verse no. 8 which explicitly says that Kaagbhusund preached the story of Lord Ram.

Kaagbhusund straddled all the four divisions of the cycle of creation known Sat Yug, Treta Yug, Dwapar Yug and Kali Yug. The entire one cycle of creation is symbolically represented in one day of his life. This is how:-

The characteristics of the four Yugs are written in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 103 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 1-4. It says that (i) during Sat Yug, the best way for spiritual involvement and obtaining religious merit was to do Dhyān (meditation, reflection and contemplation); (ii) in Treta Yug, it was doing Yagya (fire sacrifice); (iii) in Dwapar Yug one was required to worship the holy feet of Lord Ram; and (iv) in Kali Yug the only way is to remember the Lord and repeat his holy name.

We find that Kaagbhusund did all these during the course of his day.]

राम चरित बिचित्र बिधि नाना । प्रेम सहित कर सादर गाना ॥ ८ ॥
 सुनहिं सकल मति बिमल मराला । बसहिं निरंतर जे तेहिं ताला ॥ ९ ॥
 जब मैं जाइ सो कौतुक देखा । उर उपजा आनंद बिसेषा ॥ १० ॥

rāma carita bicitra bidhi nānā. prēma sahita kara sādara gānā. 8.
 sunahim sakala mati bimala marālā. basahim nirantara jē tēhim tālā. 9.
 jaba mairi jā'i sō kautuka dēkhā. ura upajā ānanda bisēṣā. 10.

Lord Ram's story which describes the Lord's deeds and life is very fascinating, strange and wonderful. He (Kaagbhusund, the saintly Crow) sang it soulfully and with the greatest of devotion in different ways. [The story of Lord Ram's divine life is heart-touching and soul-stirring, and it made Kaagbhusund so emotional and sentimental that his narration assumed the form of a devotional song, a hymn that he sang with an ecstatic heart and an overwhelmed mind that god submerged in emotions of love and devotion for the Lord. He sang like a lark, exhilarated and cheerful.] (8)

All those who had a purified mind and intellect listened to it. And those who listened to it had their mind and intellect purified.

In this way, the saintly Crow always lived near that holy lake. [That is to say, he never went anywhere else.] (9)

When I went there and saw this unique spectacle, my heart was full of intense happiness and bliss; I was overjoyed. [I was searching for such an environment where I can find peace of mind, where I can spend some time living in a pleasant surrounding and hear the divine story of my beloved Lord Ram being narrated with full devotion. I found all these requirements fulfilled there, so I decided to stay there for some time.] (10)

दो०. तब कछु काल मराल तनु धरि तहँ कीन्ह निवास ।
 सादर सुनि रघुपति गुन पुनि आयउँ कैलास ॥ ५७ ॥
 dōhā.

taba kachu kāla marāla tanu dhari taham' kīnha nivāsa.
 sādara suni raghupati guna puni āya'um' kailāsa. 57.

[I did not want to attract attention, so—] I disguised my self as a Swan and lived there for some time, reverentially listening to the divine story of Lord Raghunath (i.e. Lord Ram who was the Lord of the Raghu dynasty of Ayodhya) being narrated there.

After some time, I returned to Mt. Kailash. (Doha no. 57)

चौ०. गिरिजा कहेउँ सो सब इतिहासा । मैँ जेहि समय गयउँ खग पासा ॥ १ ॥

अब सो कथा सुनहु जेहि हेतू । गयउ काग पहिँ खग कुल केतू ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

girijā kahē'um̐ sō saba itihāsā. mair̐ jēhi samaya gaya'um̐ khaga pāsā. 1.
aba sō kathā sunahu jēhi hētū. gaya'u kāga pahim̐ khaga kula kētū. 2.

Oh Girija (the daughter of the king of mountains; Parvati)! I have told you the entire history of the time when I had gone to the crow.

[That is, I have told you why I had gone to the hermitage of Kaagbhusund to hear this marvellous story of Lord Ram, and I have also told you where it is located and how Kaagbhusund preaches there.] (1)

Now, listen to that story which narrates the circumstances why the king of the bird-race, who is the most exalted amongst them (i.e. Garud, the Eagle, who is the mount of Lord Vishnu and deemed to be the senior most bird), went to the crow (named Kaagbhusund). (2)

जब रघुनाथ कीन्हि रन क्रीड़ा । समुझत चरित होति मोहि ब्रीड़ा ॥ ३ ॥

इंद्रजीत कर आपु बँधायो । तब नारद मुनि गरुड़ पठायो ॥ ४ ॥

jaba raghunātha kīnhi rana krīrā. samujhata carita hōti mōhi brīrā. 3.
indrajīta kara āpu bam̐dhāyō. taba nārada muni garuṛa paṭhāyō. 4.

When Lord Ram (“Raghunath”, the Lord of the Raghu dynasty of Ayodhya) was enacting the sport of waging a war (in Lanka, where the Lord had gone to fight with the demon army and their king Ravana who had abducted Sita, Ram’s chaste wife), a sport (or action) of the Lord which makes me feel ashamed¹ (3)---

---He had got himself (i.e. allowed himself to be) tied by the snare that Indrajeet (“the conqueror of Indra, the king of gods”; he was the son of Ravana) had used to trap the Lord². At that time, the celestial sage Narad had sent Garud to free the Lord from the bondage. (4)

[Note—¹Why was Shiva ‘ashamed’? Lord Shiva knew that Lord Ram was the Supreme Being in a human form. Shiva worshipped Lord Ram and used the latter’s holy name as the Mantra (a divine formula) while meditating. He knew that Lord Ram could do what he wanted by his mere wish. So, Lord Ram getting ensnared by serpents, even the thought that the Lord had voluntarily allowed himself to be tied by humble serpents, or that he was subdued by his rival in a conflict when Shiva knew

very well that Lord Ram was invincible and supreme in this creation—was something unthinkable and unpalatable for Shiva.

Shiva had wished, hoped and expected that Lord Ram would use his supreme authority and stupendous powers that he possessed to overcome his rivals on the battle-field of Lanka. But instead, Shiva found that Lord Ram was behaving like ordinary mortals, and unlike the characteristic valour of the race he belonged to (i.e. the Kshatriya race as well as the mighty Raghu race of Ayodhya, which never accepts or even knows the meaning of the words defeat and subjugation by an enemy), the Lord had meekly surrendered before his rival Indrajeet. Shiva felt let down; he did not agree mentally to this decision of Lord Ram to allow himself to be trapped by serpents as it gave a wrong signal to all those who were observing the developments in the battle-field that Lord Ram was weak and could be defeated and subjugated.

Shiva feared that in the long run this will encourage all the enemies of the gods and holy people to create problems for them—because they would think that Lord Vishnu, who had manifested as Lord Ram for the exclusive purpose of protecting the gods and holy people from the torments of demons, could be overcome and defeated easily. This incident would scar the reputation of the Lord that he is invincible and the supreme protector of the entire creation—because if he can't protect himself from getting trapped by serpents, then obviously his abilities and powers are limited.

Getting subdued by his enemy in the battle-field by allowing himself to be tied by the serpent-weapon would create a negative impression about the supremacy and invincibility of Lord Ram in the eyes of the world. For, only a few wise ones would know the reality of why Lord Ram was behaving in this ordinary way of a human prince, while the rest of the world would take things at face value and begin to doubt the supremacy and authority of Lord Ram.

To understand Shiva's shame, let us take an example. Suppose a teacher has a favourite student of whom he is proud—for his knowledge, for his skills, for his wisdom, for his acumen, abilities and strength of character. Then one day in a great college debate where there is a huge audience watching closely, his favoured student lets him down by behaving ridiculously foolish, keeping silent when he knows the answers of the questions asked or the points raised by his competitors, leading to his defeat in the debate and failure to gain any recognition. What would happen to this teacher? He would be completely dejected, demoralised, crestfallen and heart-broken. Would not he be? Whereas he had expected his student to shine in the gathering and bring laurels to his mentor, he had brought only infamy and shame to him!

Shiva had tried to convince his wife Sati about the divinity and supremacy of Lord Ram as the Lord of the World in a human form when she was confused about the his reality when she had observed her husband Shiva bowing and paying his respects to Lord Ram when the latter was wandering in the forest in search of his lost wife Sita. Sati was not convinced inspite of Shiva's best attempts to enlighten her about who Lord Ram actually was. She wondered that if what Shiva claims Lord Ram to be, that the 'Lord is all-knowing and the supreme Lord of creation', then how come he does not know where his wife Sita was or who has stolen her? This eventually had led to Shiva abandoning her when she dared to take the form of Sita to test if Lord Ram would recognise who she actually was, that she was not his wife Sita but was Sati, the consort of Shiva, if he was the all-knowing Lord of the World as Shiva claimed him to be. This episode is narrated in great detail in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 48—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 59.

Now, Shiva had to tell Parvati that Lord Ram was trapped by serpents! First it was Lord Ram roaming in the wild forest searching for his wife, and now it is the Lord falling prey to his rival's weapon. Obviously, this was a matter of regret and shame for Shiva that once again he would have to repeat the cycle of trying to convince Parvati about the supremacy of Lord Ram in the light of the latter's very ordinary deeds of a human being which went contrary to Shiva's claims of the Lord's divine and supreme nature.

²This incident is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, (i) Doha no. 73 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 10-13; and (ii) Doha no. 74 along with its preceding Chaupai line no. 10.]

बंधन काटि गयो उरगादा । उपजा हृदयँ प्रचंड बिषादा ॥ ५ ॥

प्रभु बंधन समुझत बहु भाँती । करत बिचार उरग आराती ॥ ६ ॥

prabhu bandhana samujhata bahu bhāmṭī. karata bicāra uraga ārātī. 6.
bandhana kāṭi gayō uragādā. upajā hṛdayam̐ pracaṇḍa biṣādā. 5.

Garud, the one who devours snakes, had easily cut-off all the shackles of the Lord (which consisted of serpents that were magically formed from an arrow shot by Indrajeet specifically with this purpose in mind). After accomplishing his task successfully, Garud went back (to heaven). But this incident left him totally baffled, confused and dejected; a terrible unease compounded by doubts had sprouted in his heart that made him depressed and confounded. He was severely dejected on watching his Master (because Lord Ram was an incarnation of Vishnu) being humiliated in the battle-field. (5)*

When Garud, who creates terror in the serpents (uraga ārātī), recalled the way the Lord (Sri Ram) was tied in a snare, he was very upset mentally and began to ponder over the matter in various ways, being extremely baffled by what he had observed¹. (6)

[¹Why was Garud so extremely confused and baffled? The reason for Garud feeling so at Lord Ram being ensnared by serpents, which amounted to his subjugation by the demon named Indrajeet, was the same as what led Sati, the wife of Shiva, being confused about the supremacy of Lord Ram when she saw the latter wandering in the forest searching for his lost wife Sita. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 50—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 51.

Even the wise and exalted sage Vasistha, who was the son of the creator Brahma and the royal priest of the kingdom of Ayodhya, had been confused about the truth of Lord Ram though he was explicitly told about it by the Creator himself. In the beginning, Vasistha had refused to accept the job of priesthood as it was not a noble profession, but when his father Brahma explained to him that this would give him an opportunity to serve the Supreme Lord of the world, he had accepted it. But still he became confused about who Ram actually was. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 48—to Doha no. 49.

Then we have the instance of Kaagbhusund himself who became perplexed about the reality of Lord Ram whom he saw playing in the palace courtyard like ordinary human child. To convince him, Lord Ram had shown him his cosmic all-encompassing vast form. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Doha no. 77—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 83.

So there is no wonder that Garud got deluded and utterly vexed when he saw Lord Ram getting tied by the snare of serpents in the battle-field. Till this incident Garud was convinced that his Lord, Vishnu, was the supreme Authority of the world, and as such the Lord was invincible and superior to everyone else. Garud had never seen Vishnu defeated and so meekly surrendering to his adversaries earlier in life. Garud also knew that Lord Vishnu had come down to earth as Lord Ram. But what he witnessed today—that Ram could not free himself from snares, that he could be shackled in the first place, was quite contradictory to the character of Vishnu. So, Garud was absolutely confounded. He was severely dejected on watching his Master, the supreme Lord of creation, being humiliated in the battle-field in such a meek way. Refer: Doha no. 58 and its preceding Chaupai line nos. 6-8 herein below.

It ought to be noted here that it was Lord Shiva who had become instrumental in showing the truth about Lord Ram to both his wife Parvati and to Garud. Shiva had narrated the story of Lord Ram in its entirety to his wife Parvati so that her lingering doubts are removed. In the case of Garud, it was Shiva who had directed him to the hermitage of the crow Kaagbhusund so that Garud could hear the narration of the story and overcome his doubts. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Doha no. 60—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 62.

As to the question ‘why did Shiva tell Garud to go to Kaagbhusund instead of telling the Lord’s story himself?’, Shiva answered this question himself when he said that ‘he did it because it is easier for a bird to understand the language of another bird’. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 62.

*But why did all this drama happen? The answer is given by Lord Ram himself. He tells Sita, before she was abducted by Ravana, that he (Ram) had to play some game in order to fulfil his mission for which he (Vishnu) had come down to earth. The aim was to plant Sita (who was Laxmi, the divine consort of Vishnu) in Lanka, the capital of the demon race, so that Lord Ram would find an excuse to go there and eliminate the cruel demons in their own fortress. Why there? Because all the cruel and wildly sinful demons who needed to be eliminated, would assemble at one single place, and then it would be easy and practical to rid them en masse.

But for that to happen, Lord Ram and Sita would have to act a part in a drama—and this part was that they would have to expertly behave like ordinary human beings so that the demons are misled and can be trapped! Otherwise, if they and their king Ravana realise who Lord Ram actually was, they will flee and escape somewhere to hide themselves. If this happens, the entire exercise of Vishnu coming to the earth and taking birth as a human prince known to the world as ‘Ram’ would be completely defeated. This is clearly narrated in: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 23—to Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precedes Doha no. 24.]

व्यापक ब्रह्म बिरज बागीसा । माया मोह पार परमीसा ॥ ७ ॥

सो अवतार सुनेउँ जग माहीं । देखेउँ सो प्रभाव कछु नाही ॥ ८ ॥

byāpaka brahma biraja bāgīsā. māyā mōha pāra paramīsā. 7.
sō avatāra sunē'um̐ jaga māhīm̐. dēkhē'um̐ sō prabhāva kachu nāhīm̐. 8.

[The reason for Garud's doubts is now narrated—] He wondered, 'The Lord is said to be Brahm personified who is all-pervading and all-encompassing, is beyond emotions and passions, is the Lord of speech, is the Supreme Authority in creation and the Almighty Lord of all, including Maya (the power that created delusions) itself, is transcendental and the Supreme Lord of all. (7)

I have heard that this Lord has manifested himself in this world (as Lord Ram). But what I witnessed in the battle-field today is not at all compatible with the form and the power and the authority of the Lord as I know about him. I did not see any of his stupendous cosmic powers or astounding glories anywhere today¹. (8)

[Note—¹See note appended to Doha no. 58 herein below.]

दो०. भव बंधन ते छूटहिं नर जपि जा कर नाम ।
खर्ब निसाचर बाँधेउ नागपास सोइ राम ॥ ५८ ॥

dōhā.

bhava bandhana tē chūṭahīm̐ nara japi jā kara nāma.
kharba nisācara bāṁdhē'u nāgapāsa sō'i rāma. 58.

A man gets freedom from the bonds of this mortal world of transmigration by repeating the Lord's holy name, how is it possible that the same divine and almighty Lord would get tied down by an ordinary snare of serpents created by a lowly demon? (Doha no. 58)

[Note—¹Garud says: "This is why I am utterly confused as to the truth of the matter: who is Ram in reality? Is he an ordinary human prince, or is he indeed the Supreme Being in his form? If Lord Ram is indeed the almighty Lord I am told about, then it is ridiculous and incongruous to even imagine that he would allow himself to get tied down by a snare of serpents from which he could not free himself, and for which purpose I was directed by sage Narad to help free him by gobbling the serpents so that the snare breaks. It's absurd and the two notions don't add up—it's either that Lord Ram is not the Supreme Being I think him to be, or there is something more than what meets the eye."

Later on in the narration we shall read that this specific query in the mind of Garud has been addressed and explained by his preacher Kaagbhusund in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 72—to Doha no. 73. Here, Kaagbhusund clarifies to Garud that Lord Ram is indeed Brahm personified as he knows him to be, so let there be no confusion on this point. But the Lord plays his maverick tricks in various ways to fill his devotees with joy, and also that the Lord has to assume different forms and do many kind of odd deeds to suit the requirement of the circumstances and demands of the time.

Since the world is ever-changing and evolving, no two circumstances or times are alike, and therefore no two manifestations and activities of the Lord would be the same, though of course he himself is un-changing.]

चौ०. नाना भाँति मनहि समुझावा । प्रगट न ग्यान हृदयँ भ्रम छावा ॥ १ ॥

खेद खिन्न मन तर्क बढाई । भयउ मोहबस तुम्हरिहि नाई ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

nānā bhām̐ti manahi samujhāvā. pragaṭa na gyāna hṛdayam̐ bhrama chāvā.

1.

khēda khinna mana tarka baṛhāī. bhaya'u mōhabasa tumharihim̐ nāī. 2.

Garud tried his best to reassure himself and avoid confusions, but he did not succeed as wisdom did not dawn upon his mind and his heart remained covered by the shadow of doubts and delusions. (1)

He felt very remorseful and regretted the developments. The more he thought of it, the more confused he became. Indeed, he too became overwhelmed by delusions and confusions like you had been subjected to earlier¹. (2)

[¹The story of Parvati's delusion that Lord Shiva cites has been narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 48—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 56.]

ब्याकुल गयउ देवरिषि पाहीं । कहेसि जो संसय निज मन माहीं ॥ ३ ॥

सुनि नारदहि लागि अति दाया । सुनु खग प्रबल राम कै माया ॥ ४ ॥

byākula gaya'u dēvariṣi pāhīm̐. kahēsi jō sansaya nija mana māhīm̐. 3.
suni nāradahi lāgi ati dāyā. sunu khaga prabala rāma kai māyā. 4.

Being extremely upset and perplexed, Garud could not find peace. So, in order to calm himself and remove the cause of his perplexity, he went to seek advice from the celestial sage Narad and told him all about whatever was causing him confusion¹. (3)

When Narad heard what Garud said and found him indignant and agitated condition, he felt pity and sympathy for him. So he told Garud—‘Listen oh king of birds! Lord Ram's Maya is very formidably powerful and forceful². (4)

[Note—¹What was causing Garud so much confusion and vexation? It was the sight of Lord Ram, whom Garud knew to be his almighty Lord Vishnu in a human form, getting ensnared by snakes and feeling helpless in the battle-field of Lanka. Garud naturally didn't expect the all-powerful Lord to behave so helplessly like an ordinary human and allow himself to be humiliated by a demon, Meghanad or Indrajeet, the son of the demon king Ravana, who had managed to capture the Lord by his serpent-weapon. This has been narrated herein above from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 58—to Chaupai line no. 2 that follow this Doha.

²The concept of Maya will be explained to Garud later on by the crow saint Kaagbhusund in detail. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 70—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 72; and (ii) from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 116—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 117.

It is the nature of a saintly person that when he sees someone in misery he feels sympathy and pain for the sufferer. Earlier in the story there is a narration of how Narad felt pity for Jayant, the wicked son of Indra, who had assumed the form of a crow and had bitten Sita somewhere on her body to test the might of her husband Lord Ram. At that time Lord Ram had shot a blade of grass to symbolise a headless arrow at him, and Jayant went through all the places in heaven and elsewhere to hide but this arrow pursued it relentlessly. Seeing certain death facing on his face, Jayant had approached Narad because this saint was sure to give him some advice that would help him overcome the horror he faced. When Narad saw Jayant in utter distress, he had felt sorry for him and pitied his condition. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 2.]

जो ग्यानिन्ह कर चित अपहरई । बरिआई बिमोह मन करई ॥ ५ ॥
जेहिं बहु बार नचावा मोही । सोइ व्यापी बिहंगपति तोही ॥ ६ ॥

jō gyāninha kara cita apahara'ī. bari'ā'īm bimōha mana kara'ī. 5.
jēhīm bahu bāra nacāvā mōhī. sō'i byāpī bihaṅgapati tōhī. 6.

It (the Maya) is so overriding and powerful that it steals (i.e. stupefies and dulls) the faculty of reasoning and thought even in those who claim to be wise, realised and enlightened (“Gyani”). Not only that, this Maya forces ‘Moha’ (infatuation, attraction and attachment with the grosser aspects of this world)¹. (5)

It has made me dance to its tune on more than one occasions². Oh king of birds, it is the same Maya that has engulfed you and blinded your mind. [That is, you have become deluded, and that is why your mind is unable to think and rationalise anything.] (6)

[Note—¹The persons who are enlightened and self-realised are not expected to be attracted to the gross material world or seek pleasure and comfort from it, and neither are they expected to gratify the urges of the organs of their body. But Maya is so powerful a force in Nature that if it casts its shadow on such wise men, they fall from their exalted stature and begin to behave like utter ignorant people who are on a roller coaster ride of delusions and its associated problems in this world.

The power of Maya to delude even great sages and seers has been reiterated elsewhere also—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 70.

²Narad had suffered the powerful blow of Maya. He had been overcome by passion and lust, getting so infatuated with a beautiful girl that he wanted to marry her. When Lord Vishnu saw his passionate condition and decided that it was not good for Narad, the Lord prevented him from marrying. This infuriated Narad and he cursed Lord

Vishnu. Of course he lamented and regretted later on, but the damage had been done. This incident is narrated in detail in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 124—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 138.]

महामोह उपजा उर तोरें । मिटिहि न बेगि कहें खग मोरें ॥ ७ ॥

चतुरानन पहिं जाहु खगेसा । सोइ करेहु जेहि होइ निदेसा ॥ ८ ॥

mahāmōha upajā ura tōrēm. miṭihi na bēgi kahēm khaga mōrēm. 7.
caturānana pahim jāhu khagēsā. sō'i karēhu jēhi hō'i nidēsā. 8.

Oh Bird (Garud)! Great Delusion (“Maha Moha”) has taken root in your heart (i.e. it has found a firm foothold in your heart), and it will not be so easily uprooted (removed; eradicated) by any words of mine. (7)

So it will be advisable for you to go to the four-headed creator Brahma (who is the wise old patriarch of this creation, the senior-most God and the creator of the Vedas, and as such he is the most competent Authority to give you correct guidance in this matter). Go to him and tell him everything that’s worrying you, and then follow his instructions which would be for your own good¹.’ (8)

[Note—¹Brahma was consulted by the gods and others whenever they needed advice because he is the patriarch of creation, the old grandfather of this creation, and regarded as most experienced, knowledgeable and most competent to give correct advice as he had created the Vedas, the ancient scriptures.

When the demons had been tormenting and terrorising the earth and the gods, at that time also they had gone to Brahma to seek his advice—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Sortha no. 184 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 4-8 and Chanda line nos. 1-4.]

दो०. अस कहि चले देवरिषि करत राम गुन गान ।

हरि माया बल बरनत पुनि पुनि परम सुजान ॥ ५९ ॥

dōhā.

asa kahi calē dēvariṣi karata rāma guna gāna.
hari māyā bala baranata puni puni parama sujāna. 59.

After having advised Garud in the aforesaid manner (as narrated in the previous verses), the wise and enlightened celestial sage Narad went ahead on his way while repeatedly praising the glories of Lord Raghunath (Sri Ram) and recalling in his mind the wondrous effects of the delusory powers of Lord Hari (i.e. Sri Ram) that have no bounds and the fascinating way it affects a creature¹. (Doha no. 59)

[Note—¹Narad himself had a bitter experience of the Lord’s delusion-creating powers when he was led astray from his spiritual path of austerity and penance by becoming enchanted by the beauty of a girl whom he longed to marry inspite of being a learned celestial sage who had taken a vow of celibacy. At that time, Narad was so infatuated

with that lady that when Lord Vishnu threw a spanner in the wheel and prevented Narad from falling into the honey-trap laid by Maya (i.e. by the Lord's delusion-creating powers), the sage became so infuriated with the Lord that he had cursed him to become a human and suffer the agony of separation from his beloved. This curse by-and-by resulted in Lord Vishnu assuming the human form of Lord Ram and wondering in the forest in search of his wife Sita who was stolen by the demon king Ravana as narrated in the well-known story of the epic Ramayan.

This incidence is narrated in fine detail in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 124—to Doha no. 139.]

चौ०. तब खगपति बिरंचि पहिं गयऊ । निज संदेह सुनावत भयऊ ॥ १ ॥
 सुनि बिरंचि रामहि सिरु नावा । समुझि प्रताप प्रेम अति छावा ॥ २ ॥
 caupāī.

taba khagapati biran̄ci pahim̄ gaya'ū. nija sandēha sunāvata bhaya'ū. 1.
 suni biran̄ci rāmahī siru nāvā. samujhi pratāpa prēma ati chāvā. 2.

Then (upon receiving sage Narad's advice) Garud, the king of the birds, went to the Creator ("biran̄ci"; Brahma) and narrated to him his confusions and doubts¹. (1)

When the Creator heard what Garud said, he bowed his head reverentially to Lord Ram as a mark of showing respect to the Lord's great powers and majesty. Realising the Lord's might and glory, the Creator was overwhelmed with love and affection for the Lord (Sri Ram). (2)

[Note—¹It is to be noted here that Garud is being referred to as the "King of Birds"—"khagapati". The very fact that Garud still regarded himself as being a 'king of birds' inspite of being overcome with confusions and doubts that surely do not behove of a king as they undermine a king's level of wisdom, intelligence and confidence, shows that he was arrogant and proud. This is why Garud had neither bowed to sage Narad while taking leave of him earlier, nor did he bow now to Brahma, the Creator, who was like his great-grandfather.

So Brahma marvelled at the might of the Lord's Maya, the fantastic delusions that it creates that had pulled the rug from under the feet of Garud now, and Narad earlier. It is indeed remarkable that Maya did not spare even Garud who was so close to Lord Vishnu, being his mount and always at the Lord's beck-and-call. It had similarly not spared Narad who was the Lord's favourite devotee. Therefore Brahma became alert and immediately bowed his head to Lord Ram so that Maya spares him from the same fate as suffered by these two individuals, for had Brahma not done so it would be tantamount to his being arrogant and proud himself, and thus be an easy prey for the maverick tricks of Maya!]

मन महुँ करइ बिचार बिधाता । माया बस कबि कोबिद ग्याता ॥ ३ ॥
 हरि माया कर अमिति प्रभावा । बिपुल बार जेहिं मोहि नचावा ॥ ४ ॥

mana mahum̐ kara'i bicāra bidhātā. māyā basa kabi kōbida gyātā. 3.
hari māyā kara amiti prabhāvā. bipula bāra jēhim mōhi nacāvā. 4.

The Creator mused within himself thus: 'Maya has influenced and dominated even the learned sages, seers and enlightened souls (i.e. it spares none)¹. (3)

Indeed and in all sooth, the powers of Maya are so profound that it has not even spared me and had made dance to its tunes many a times². (4)

[Note—¹Refer Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 10 that precedes Doha no. 62; Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 70; and Doha no. 118 Ka.

²Brahma is a wise and learned senior God. When he found that Garud was overcome by the Lord's Maya, he felt sympathy for him and wanted to help him out of his predicament. The lesson here is that when learned and wise seniors in the society observe that someone is behaving in a particular odd manner, they should not get angry at him but be patient with him, and try their best to understand the reason for the odd behaviour and help that person by giving him proper, relevant and practical advice like Brahma had done with Garud.]

अग जगमय जग मम उपराजा । नहिं आचरज मोह खगराजा ॥ ५ ॥
तब बोले बिधि गिरा सुहाई । जान महेस राम प्रभुताई ॥ ६ ॥

aga jagamaya jaga mama uparājā. nahim ācaraja mōha khagarājā. 5.
taba bōlē bidhi girā suhā'ī. jāna mahēsa rāma prabhutā'ī. 6.

The entire animate as well as inanimate world has been created by me (Brahma), and since Maya has often been able to mislead even me there is no wonder and great surprise in that it had overcome Garud, the king of birds, as well.'

[To wit, if Maya can delude the patriarch of creation who is supposed to be the wisest of all the creatures and most learned amongst them, there is nothing astonishing in Maya overcoming the wisdom of a 'bird' such as Garud was.] (5)

Thinking thus, the Creator spoke sweet words to Garud, words that seemed pleasant and soothing (i.e. auspicious and harbingers of good)¹.

He told Garud: 'See, Lord Shiva ("Mahesh"; the Great God—"Maha + Ish") is fully enlightened about Lord Ram's glories, authority, majestic powers and divinity. (6)

[Note—¹The words of Brahma were good advice for the welfare of Garud, were given in good faith, were in praise of Lord Ram as well as Lord Shiva, and were spoken with politeness and empathy. Hence, they were auspicious and sweet to hear.]

बैनतेय संकर पहिं जाहू । तात अनत पूछहु जनि काहू ॥ ७ ॥
तहँ होइहि तव संसय हानी । चलेउ बिहंग सुनत बिधि बानी ॥ ८ ॥

bainatēya saṅkara pahim jāhū. tāta anata pūchahu jani kāhū. 7.
tahaṁ hō'ihī tava sansaya hānī. calē'u bihaṅga sunata bidhi bānī. 8.

Oh the Son of Vintaa (“bainatēya”—i.e. Garud)! Therefore, you should go to Lord Shiva (“saṅkara”) (to get your problems resolved). But my dear (“tāta”), I request you not to ask anyone anything anywhere else (and go straight to Shiva, lest you would be more confounded than what you are at present)¹.

[To wit, no one is more competent and qualified to answer your queries about the divine reality and the truth about Lord Ram than Lord Shiva is. So don't be waylaid by self-professed wise men or gods whom you may encounter on your way, but head straight to Lord Shiva. Pay heed to my advice, for otherwise you will land yourself in a far worse situation than you find yourself at present.] (7)

There, at Lord Shiva's place, your doubts and confusions would be dispelled, and the Lord would be able to guide you properly and on the right path.'

Hearing these words of the Creator, the Bird started off immediately for Shiva's place². (8)

[Note—¹The lesson to be learnt here is that when one faces a problem in life, the wise thing to do is not sit over it but find someone who can give true, honest and friendly advice. Then, one must pay heed to it, and not go to the market advertising his problems as there would be so many 'advisors' around who would exploit his anxiety and mental confusions to suit their own agenda by proffering advice and solutions that do more good to the vested interest of such advisors than to the troubled man himself. So therefore, one should first research some good teacher or advisor, and head straight to him.

²Once again we note that Garud has not paid obeisance to Brahma by bowing before him at the time of leaving him for Shiva's place. Besides the fact that Garud was under the influence of Maya that had made him arrogant and haughty, Maya had also overshadowed his mind and prevented him from thinking rationally and in an orderly way. Garud had even forgotten the basics of courtesy and proper behaviour by at least saying a 'thank you' to Brahma or Narad. He just gate-crashed on them and went away as if he was intoxicated, throwing all norms of politeness and decency to the wind!]

दो०. परमातुर बिहंगपति आयउ तब मो पास ।
जात रहेउं कुबेर गृह रहिहु उमा कैलास ॥ ६० ॥
dōhā.

paramātura bihaṅgapati āya'u taba mō pāsa.
jāta rahē'um kubēra gr̥ha rahihu umā kailāsa. 60.

Lord Shiva told Parvati, his consort, 'Then (after Brahma advised him to come straight to me to resolve his mental doubts regarding the truth and reality of Lord Ram, something that had so perplexed Garud), the king of birds (Garud) came to me anxiously and full of distress. At that time I was on my way to Kuber's place, while you were here at Mt. Kailash. (Doha no. 60)

चौ०. तेहिं मम पद सादर सिरु नावा । पुनि आपन संदेह सुनावा ॥ १ ॥
 सुनि ता करि बिनती मृदु बानी । प्रेम सहित मैं कहेउँ भवानी ॥ २ ॥
 caupāī.

tēhiṁ mama pada sādara siru nāvā. puni āpana sandēha sunāvā. 1.
 suni tā kari binatī mṛdu bānī. prēma sahita maim kahē'um' bhavānī. 2.

He (Garud) first bowed his head reverentially at my feet¹ and then told me about his doubts and confusions. (1)

Oh Bhavani (one of the many names of Parvati, the consort of Shiva)! When I heard his prayers and sweet words asking me to help him solve his riddle, I too responded to him in the like manner, politely and sweetly, and told him --- . (2)

[Note—¹Garud has bowed his head for the first time now, before Lord Shiva. Earlier he had neither done so before sage Narad nor before Brahma. This is because by this time he had realised that both Narad and Brahma may have not liked his arrogant behaviour and so they did not welcome him warmly and help him by answering his queries though both of them were competent and qualified enough to do so. They simply waved him off to someone else to show their annoyance towards him.

So Garud now thought that if he behaved in the same irreverent way with Lord Shiva and gets a cold-shoulder treatment from the Lord, then he would be neither here nor there. So he acted prudently now and showed courtesy to Shiva by bowing his head before him.]

मिलेहु गरुड़ मारग महँ मोही । कवन भाँति समुझावौं तोही ॥ ३ ॥
 तबहिं होइ सब संसय भंगा । जब बहु काल करिअ सतसंगा ॥ ४ ॥

milēhu garuṛa māraga maham' mōhī. kavana bhām'ti samujhāvaum' tōhī. 3.
 tabahiṁ hō'i saba sansaya bhaṅgā. jaba bahu kāla kari'a satasaṅgā. 4.

“Oh Garud! You have met me on the way, and so how can I properly explain things to you now. [This is because one needs to sit down quietly and patiently to concentrate on the topic to be discussed and contemplate on any serious matter, to teach and understand something. It can't be done in a hurry while one is on the road to somewhere he is going.] (3)

Anyway, I will not disappoint you; I will try to help you. It appears to me that your doubts and confusions would be dispelled only when you have a company of saints and wise souls for quite some time. [To wit, the proper remedy for the sort of problem you face is the company of saints and holy people. The reason is outlined below. So I will direct you to such a place and be sure your spiritual needs would be taken care of.] (4)

सुनिअ तहाँ हरि कथा सुहाई । नाना भाँति मुनिन्ह जो गाई ॥ ५ ॥
जेहि महुँ आदि मध्य अवसाना । प्रभु प्रतिपाद्य राम भगवाना ॥ ६ ॥

sunī'a tahām' hari kathā suhā'ī. nānā bhām'ti muninha jō gā'ī. 5.
jēhi mahum' ādi madhya avasānā. prabhu pratipādyā rāma bhagavānā. 6.

When you stay at such a place (i.e. in the company of saintly souls) for a long time, you would be able to hear on a regular basis the divine story of Lord Hari as it is narrated by diverse sages and seers in as many diverse ways, with its many variations and connotations. [The general ambience of such places is conducive to mental peace and spiritual well-being, and when you abide there for some time your perplexities and restlessness would subside.] (5)

In these narrations (of the many hues of the Lord's divine stories), the chief Lord who is being praised and honoured by all and who is the main theme of such discourses—from the beginning, through the entire narration till its end—is no other Lord God but Lord Ram himself¹. (6)

[Note—¹On the face of it there appears to be so much diversity and variations in the deities and gods who are being praised and honoured and shown respect to by the sages and saints during their discourses and discussions. But it must be fully remembered and properly understood that all of them are the same Lord God known as 'Ram' who is being invoked in all these many forms and the many roles that the Lord plays. It's the same Truth and Reality seen through differently coloured glasses.

The benefit of attending such congregation where a wise saint narrates the divine story of the Lord is that he explains the story in such a simple way as to be understood by all; both the learned and the laity are able to grasp the essence.]

नित हरि कथा होत जहँ भाई । पठवउँ तहाँ सुनहु तुम्ह जाई ॥ ७ ॥
जाइहि सुनत सकल संदेहा । राम चरन होइहि अति नेहा ॥ ८ ॥

nita hari kathā hōta jaham' bhā'ī. paṭhava'um' tahām' sunahu tumha jā'ī. 7.
jā'ihi sunata sakala sandēhā. rāma carana hō'ihi ati nēhā. 8.

So therefore, I am sending you to such a place where Lord Hari's divine stories are narrated on a daily basis. You go there and listen to them. (7)

By attentively listening to these divine narrations all your doubts and confusions (about Lord Ram) would be dispelled, and you will be blessed by having profound love and affection (as well as devotion) for the holy feet of Lord Ram. (8)

दो०. बिनु सतसंग न हरि कथा तेहि बिनु मोह न भाग ।
मोह गएँ बिनु राम पद होइ न दृढ़ अनुराग ॥ ६१ ॥

dōhā.

binu satasaṅga na hari kathā tēhi binu mōha na bhāga.
mōha ga'ēm' binu rāma pada hō'i na dṛṛha anurāga. 61.

[Lord Shiva observed thus:-] One cannot hear discourses and talks related to Lord Hari (the Lord God; Lord Vishnu) without the company of saints and holy men, and without hearing such divine discourses or talks it is not possible for anyone to get rid of spiritual ignorance and delusions¹.

And without elimination of delusions and ignorance one cannot develop abiding affection and devotion for the august feet of Lord Ram (which would pave the way for a person attaining eternal bliss and peace—called the ‘Shanti Pada’, the state of existence marked by blessedness, beatitude and felicity, a state-of-being or a state-of-existence that makes a man fulfilled in all respects). (Doha no. 61)

[Note—¹Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Sundar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 7; (b) Uttar Kand, (ii) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 45; (iii) Chaupai line nos. 6-7 that precede Doha no. 69.

In this cited verses it has been emphasised that the opportunity to have communion with saints is possible by the grace of Lord Ram.]

चौ०. मिलहिं न रघुपति बिनु अनुरागा । किऐं जोग तप ग्यान बिरागा ॥ १ ॥

उत्तर दिसि सुंदर गिरि नीला । तहँ रह काकभुसुंडि सुसीला ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

milahim na raghupati binu anurāgā. ki'ēm' jōga tapa gyāna birāgā. 1.
uttara disi sundara giri nīlā. taham' raha kākabhusuṇḍi susīlā. 2.

[Lord Shiva further advised Garud as follows—] Lord Ram, who is also known as “Raghupati, the Lord of the Raghu kings”, is not to be found or accessed except by having true virtues of love and affection for the Lord God even if one practices a lot of Yoga (meditation), Tapa (austerity and penance), Gyan (acquisition of knowledge of the scriptures and become learned) or Vairagya (renunciation)¹. (1)

There is such a place in the northern direction where there is a beautiful and pleasant mountain known as Neel Giri (literally, the “blue mountain”). On it lives a courteous saint known by the name of “Kaagbhasund”². (2)

[Note—¹To wit, the only one and simple way to the Lord God is the path of love and devotion for him. Here, Lord Shiva has quietly warned Garud to remember this one simple formula if he wishes to know who Lord Ram actually is—and it is to have true love and devotion for the Lord. For otherwise, no matter how hard he tries, the access to the truth of the Lord would always elude him, and he would always be denied the real spiritual benefit that one gets by worshipping the Lord.

²He was a crow, a “kaag”, by body, and the reason why he became a ‘crow’ has been explained by the saint himself when Garud too wished to know about it during his interaction with him. This is narrated later on in this Book, from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 94—to Doha no. 114.]

राम भगति पथ परम प्रबीना । ग्यानी गुन गृह बहु कालीना ॥ ३ ॥
राम कथा सो कहइ निरंतर । सादर सुनहिं बिबिध बिहंगबर ॥ ४ ॥

rāma bhagati patha parama prabīnā. gyānī guna gr̥ha bahu kālīnā. 3.
rāma kathā sō kaha'i nirantara. sādara sunahim bibidha bihaṅgabara. 4.

[Praising Kaagbhusund, Lord Shiva told Garud—] He is highly conversant with the path of devotion for Lord Ram and is deemed to be an expert in it. He is wise, learned and enlightened. He has excellent virtues and character. And is an aged saint who has practiced what he preaches for a long time, and so is immensely qualified on the subject he teaches (which is love and devotion for Lord Ram that leads to spiritual bliss and beatitude and fulfilment, and how to overcome all delusions associated with life in this world)¹. (3)

He (Kaagbhusund) narrates the divine story of Lord Ram regularly (in a variety of ways, explaining it from different angles and perspectives so that it is easy to understand by all). Many birds of varying denominations and feathers listen to this discourse with great reverence and devotion². (4)

[Note—¹Lord Shiva wished to assure Garud that the person to whom he is being sent is not an ordinary one, and Garud should not be misled by his physical appearance of a 'crow'. It was very important to convince Garud on this point—for Shiva realised that Garud would treat Kaagbhusund intuitively with contempt and disdain when he finds him to be mere 'crow'. Garud had already told Shiva that both Narad and Brahma had refused to instruct him themselves. So Shiva concluded that there must surely something wrong with Garud that Narad and Brahma, who were both fully qualified to preach him, had decided to evade him. Perhaps it was because Garud was haughty of his being a "king of birds". So it was imperative for him to know the reality of Kaagbhusund, for otherwise there were fair chances that he would insult this sage also when he finds out that he was a 'crow'.

²Shiva warned Garud to discard his ego of being a 'king of birds' when he approaches the hermitage of Kaagbhusund. He will find all sorts of birds listening to the divine story of Lord Ram, and he should act humbly and be patient. He must not expect them to treat him like a king is treated in his royal court, because Garud is attending a spiritual discourse and not his royal court while he stays in the hermitage of Kaagbhusund. He must not expect any special treatment.]

जाइ सुनहु तहँ हरि गुन भूरी । होइहि मोह जनित दुख दूरी ॥ ५ ॥
मैं जब तेहि सब कहा बुझाई । चलेउ हरषि मम पद सिरु नाई ॥ ६ ॥

jā'i sunahu taham̃ hari guna bhūrī. hō'ihī mōha janita dukha dūrī. 5.
mair̃ jaba tēhi saba kahā bujhā'ī. calē'u haraṣi mama pada siru nā'ī. 6.

So go there and listen attentively to the narration of the divine glories and greatness of Lord Hari (i.e. Sri Ram), and by doing so your perplexities and sorrows having their origin in confusions and delusions would disappear.” (5)

[Lord Shiva told Parvati—] When I had thus advised Garud in the aforesaid manner and explained all the things to him, he felt relieved and glad in his heart. Then he bowed his head before my feet and cheerfully went his way. (6)

ताते उमा न मैं समुझावा । रघुपति कृपाँ मरमु मैं पावा ॥ ७ ॥
होइहि कीन्ह कबहुँ अभिमाना । सो खोवै चह कृपानिधाना ॥ ८ ॥

tātē umā na mair̥ samujhāvā. raghupati kṛpām̐ maramu mair̥ pāvā. 7.
hō'ihī kīnha kabahum̐ abhimānā. sō khōvai caha kṛpānidhānā. 8.

{Now, Lord Shiva explains to Parvati, his consort who is called Uma here, why he himself had not taught Garud the truth of Lord Ram though he was competent to do so.}

Oh Uma! I had not explained anything to Garud myself because by the grace of Lord Ram I had an intuitive feeling [7] that he (Garud) must have exhibited his ego, arrogance and pride on some previous occasion, and the merciful Lord wished to make him (Garud) lose or be freed of these negative traits present inside him [8]¹. (7-8)

[Note—¹Lord Ram does not wish to make his devotee spiritually suffer in any way. In his primary form Lord Ram is known as the cosmic Lord Vishnu, and Garud is his celestial vehicle or mount. Garud is very a close attendant and confidant of the Lord, and therefore it is unimaginable that the Lord would punish him by making him suffer physically. But at the same time it is obligatory upon the Lord to ensure that those who are close to him have no spiritual taints in their inner-selves. Ego, pride, arrogance and haughtiness are never thought of as good qualities. Since Garud had them, the Lord decided to get rid of them altogether.

What was wrong with Garud? He thought that he was a ‘king’ of the bird class of creatures, that he was superior to others for being too close to the Lord God, and one who is especially privileged by the virtue of his close association with the Supreme Lord himself. The Lord wanted to teach him a lesson—that the only quality that matters with the Lord is devotion and love for him, and not one’s pedigree or physical strength or appearances or outworldly show. No amount of service pleases the Lord as much as having undiluted love, affection and devotion for him does.

When Garud would eventually discover that a humble creature as an ordinary crow who is usually treated with disdain and contempt by one and all, is so exalted that Lord Shiva himself praised him in fluent tongue, that this crow was also blessed by Lord Ram himself as we shall read in due course, that this crow was so enlightened and wise that a time comes when the “king of bird” is obliged to approach him with some prayer, and the fact that all the birds hold him in high esteem out of their natural affection and respect for him, and not by the virtue of his pedigree or designation as was the case with Garud who was shown respect by the community of birds just because he was the ‘king of birds’ and the ‘celestial Eagle’ who is regarded as the

best-by-birth amongst all the birds—it is sure that Garud’s sense of false pride and ego would be crushed.

This fact was intuitively discovered by the wise Lord Shiva. He determined that Lord Ram wishes that Garud should go to a ‘crow’ to get knowledge so that his ego and pride are crushed. So therefore Lord Shiva decided not to preach Garud himself, but send him to Kaagbhusund instead.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precede Doha no. 74 where Kaagbhusund has told Garud that Lord Ram does not like his devotee to have any trace of pride, ego or arrogance inside him, and should these negative traits somehow find entry in the heart and mind of the devotee, the Lord ensures that he is got rid of them as soon as possible.] (7-8)

कछु तेहि ते पुनि मैं नहिं राखा । समुझइ खग खगही कै भाषा ॥ ९ ॥
प्रभु माया बलवंत भवानी । जाहि न मोह कवन अस ग्यानी ॥ १० ॥

kachu tēhi tē puni mair̥m nahir̥m rākhā. samujha'i khaga khagahī kai bhāṣā. 9.
prabhu māyā balavanta bhavānī. jāhi na mōha kavana asa gyānī. 10.

Another reason why I didn’t keep him with me to explain things to him and remove his doubts and delusions (about Lord Ram’s reality) is that it would be easier for a bird to understand another bird’s language in a better way than what he would be able grasp if I had preached him myself. (9)

Indeed and in all sooth, oh Bhavani (Parvati), the Lord’s Maya (i.e. his delusion creating powers) is so mightily formidable that there is no one so wise and enlightened as to be beyond its reach and dominance. (10)

दो०. ग्यानी भगत सिरोमनि त्रिभुवनपति कर जान ।
ताहि मोह माया नर पावँर करहिं गुमान ॥ ६२ (क) ॥
dōhā.

gyānī bhagata sirōmani tribhuvanapati kara jāna.
tāhi mōha māyā nara pāvam̐ra karahir̥m gumāna. 62 (a).

One should understand the gravity of the situation and realise the majestic and overriding powers of Maya to create delusions and confusions that it did not permit even Garud—who is regarded as an enlightened soul, one who is the most exalted amongst the devotees of the Lord, and was also the mount (or the vehicle) of the Lord of the Three Worlds (i.e. Lord Vishnu who is the Lord of the Universe), a designation that always kept Garud in close proximity of the Lord of Maya himself—to escape its grasp, so it is highly incongruous and ridiculous for others (even those who pride themselves for their knowledge, as well as the ordinary creatures) to think that they are immune to the effects of Maya. (Doha no. 62-a)

[PAUSE 28 FOR A THIRTY-DAY RECITATION]

सिव बिरंछि कहूँ मोहड़ को है बपुरा आन ।

अस जियँ जानि भजहिँ मुनि माया पति भगवान ॥ ६२ (ख) ॥

siva biran̄ci kahum̄ mōha'i kō hai bapurā āna.

asa jiyam̄ jāni bhajahim̄ muni māyā pati bhagavāna. 62 (b).

The Lord's delusion-creating powers known as Maya has enthralled, enchanted and captivated even the most exalted and enlightened of souls such as Lord Shiva and the creator Brahma, say then what do ordinary creatures count against its powers and authority?¹

Keeping this fact in mind, wise sages, seers and hermits worship and pay their obeisance to the 'Lord of this Maya'². (Doha no. 62-b)

[Note—¹No one is beyond the reach of Maya. No one can claim immunity from its effects; no one can say that he or she is not affected by Maya. If Maya can cast its magical spell on Garud, Brahma the creator, Lord Shiva the concluder and the most enlightened amongst the Gods, and sage Narad who is one of the dearest devotees of Lord Vishnu, what hope do others have to escape the clutches of Maya?

²This is because Maya would automatically be constrained and would think twice before disturbing these saints, sages, seers and hermits as its mischievous acts would annoy the Lord himself because these noble souls have devotion for the Lord, they worship and pay their obeisance to him. Maya is like a maid of the Lord, and therefore it just cannot afford to do anything that goes against the wishes of its Lord.

This fact has been explained in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 116—to Doha no. 116 ka.]

चौ०. गयउ गरुड़ जहँ बसइ भुसुंडा । मति अकुंठ हरि भगति अखंडा ॥ १ ॥

देखि सैल प्रसन्न मन भयऊ । माया मोह सोच सब गयऊ ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

gaya'u garuṛa jaham̄ basa'i bhusuṇḍā. mati akunṭha hari bhagati akhaṇḍā. 1.

dēkhi saila prasanna mana bhaya'ū. māyā mōha sōca saba gaya'ū. 2.

Thereafter, Garud went to the place where lived Bhusund (i.e. the crow-saint whose name was Kaagbhusund). [It was on the summit of the mountain called 'Neel Giri'. Refer Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 62 herein above.]

Bhusund had a sharp intellect, was very wise and enlightened, and was well established in having unwavering devotion for Lord Hari. (1)

When Garud saw the majestic mountain he felt very glad at heart. The very sight of the place filled him with exhilaration so much so that all his mental weariness, anxiety and confusions induced by Maya were immediately dispelled¹. (2)

[Note—¹The idea is that a place where saints live has an environment where positive spiritual vibrations are dominant, and the whole place acquires a divine halo around it that immediately calms down agitated nerves and overcomes all perplexities that burden a creature's mind.

This mountain was blessed by the virtue of sage Kaagbhusund living there and the divine stories of Lord Ram being narrated by him on a regular basis. This gave the place a divine halo, and it was beyond the purview of both Maya and Kaal (the effects of delusions and changing times respectively). Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 62 where Lord Shiva has hinted at this fact, (ii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 88 where Lord Ram has blessed Kaagbhusund to this effect that he would be immune to Kaal and Maya, and (iii) Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precede Doha no. 89 where Kaagbhusund says that ever since he came to this hermitage he has lived there peacefully because Maya could not disturb him any longer.]

करि तड़ाग मज्जन जलपाना । बट तर गयउ हृदयँ हरषाना ॥ ३ ॥
बृद्ध बृद्ध बिहंग तहँ आए । सुनै राम के चरित सुहाए ॥ ४ ॥

kari tarāga majjana jalapānā. baṭa tara gaya'u hṛdayam̐ haraṣānā. 3.
br̥d'dha br̥d'dha bihaṅga taham̐ ā'ē. sunai rāma kē carita suhā'ē. 4.

Garud first freshened himself by taking a bath in the lake at that place, and took a refreshing drinking of its fresh and cool water.

Then he went to the Banyan Tree, and was gladdened heart as he approached its shadow. (3)

He observed that aged birds of different feathers and stock had come and collected there to cheerfully hear the divine and pleasant stories of Lord Ram being narrated at that place (by the crow-saint Kaagbhusund). (4)

कथा अरंभ करै सोइ चाहा । तेही समय गयउ खगनाहा ॥ ५ ॥
आवत देखि सकल खगराजा । हरषेउ बायस सहित समाजा ॥ ६ ॥

kathā arambha karai sō'i cāhā. tēhī samaya gaya'u khaganāhā. 5.
āvata dēkhi sakala khagarājā. haraṣē'u bāyasa sahita samājā. 6.

Kaagbhusund was just getting ready to start the narration of the divine story of Lord Ram when Garud went there. (5)

When Kaagbhusund saw the King of Birds approaching the place, he as well as all other birds who had assembled there were filled with delight. (6)

अति आदर खगपति कर कीन्हा । स्वागत पूछि सुआसन दीन्हा ॥ ७ ॥
करि पूजा समेत अनुरागा । मधुर बचन तब बोलेउ कागा ॥ ८ ॥

ati ādara khagapati kara kīnhā. svāgata pūchi su'āsana dīnhā. 7.
kari pūjā samēta anurāgā. madhura bacana taba bōlē'u kāgā. 8.

He (Kaagbhusund) got up enthusiastically to welcome the King of Birds with great respect. He asked the latter's well-being and offered him a comfortable and elevated seat to sit upon¹. (7)

Then he (Kaagbhusund) paid his obeisance to the exalted guest (Garud) and duly worshipped him (in accordance with the normal practice of welcoming and showing due respect to the king of the realm).

Once these formalities were finished, the Crow (Kaagbhusund) spoke most sweetly --- (8)

[Note—¹Garud was a 'King of Birds', and so Kaagbhusund offered him a seat befitting his stature. Perhaps he always kept a separate seat reserved for some important guest who might come to hear the discourse.]

दो०. नाथ कृतार्थ भयउँ मैं तव दरसन खगराज ।

आयसु देहु सो करौं अब प्रभु आयहु केहि काज ॥ ६३ (क) ॥

dōhā.

nātha kṛtāratha bhaya'um' mair̥m tava darasana khagarāja.
āyasu dēhu sō karaum̐ aba prabhu āyahu kēhi kāja. 63 (a).

{Kaagbhusund was overwhelmed and exceedingly happy by the arrival at his hermitage of such an exalted guest as Garud for this was a great honour for him and a rare privilege for the crow-saint that the 'king of birds' would personally come to him to hear him teach and narrate the divine stories of Lord Ram. So he expressed his gratitude.}

Kaagbhusund expressed his pleasure and happiness when he told Garud, 'Oh King of Birds (khagarāja)! I am exceedingly obliged and feeling blessed by your sight. Oh my Lord (prabhu)! Now please tell me the reason for your visit and I will do my best to fulfil your wishes.' (Doha no. 63-a)

सदा कृतार्थ रूप तुम्ह कह मृदु बचन खगेस ।

जेहि कै अस्तुति सादर निज मुख कीन्हि महेस ॥ ६३ (ख) ॥

sadā kṛtāratha rūpa tumha kaha mṛdu bacana khagēsa.
jēhi kai astuti sādara nija mukha kīnhi mahēsa. 63 (b).

Garud replied politely and sweetly, 'Indeed and in all sooth, you are an embodiment of blessedness and good fortunes, one who has been so reverentially and lavishly praised by Lord Shiva with his own mouth¹. (Doha no. 63-b)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-5 that precede Doha no. 62.]

चौ०. सुनहु तात जेहि कारन आयउँ । सो सब भयउ दरस तव पायउँ ॥ १ ॥

देखि परम पावन तव आश्रम । गयउ मोह संसय नाना भ्रम ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

sunahu tāta jēhi kārana āya'um̃. sō saba bhaya'u darasa tava pāya'um̃. 1.
dēkhi parama pāvana tava āśrama. gaya'u mōha sansaya nānā bhrama. 2.

[Garud continued—] Listen Dear! The reason why I have come to you has already been accomplished and I have had the good fortune and the privilege of seeing your divine self¹. (1)

As soon as I had a glimpse of your holy hermitage, all my delusions, confusions and doubts of varying dispensations were dispelled². (2)

[Note—¹There were two purposes for Garud coming to the hermitage of Kaagbhusund. One was that he wanted to get rid of his mental perplexities, disturbances and restlessness, and this was accomplished as soon as he was within the periphery of the saint's hermitage. This is clearly mentioned in the Chaupai line no. 2 here, as well as in Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 63 herein above.

The importance of having the company of saints and pious people has been stressed in Ram Charit Manas, Chaupai line nos. 6-11 that precede Doha no. 3.

The other reason was that Garud was surprised why such exalted souls as sage Narad, the creator Brahma and Lord Shiva had such a high opinion of Kaagbhusund who was a 'bird' by birth. So, being a 'king of the birds' he wondered how such an exalted subject of his own kingdom had escaped his notice. He wanted to find out if there was any truth in what Narad, Brahma and Shiva said. When he reached the hermitage of the crow-saint, the sublime spiritual atmosphere and the holy aura of the place overwhelmed him. He then realised that many a times a priceless gem lie hidden in one's own treasury while one goes about begging from others.

To wit, had Garud known that there was one such highly enlightened and blessed member of his own kingdom, why would he then have gone searching for answers to his mental confusions at other places, such as to Narad, Brahma and Shiva? Wouldn't he have come straight to Kaagbhusund or even summon him to his own place?

So therefore, this other reason for Garud coming to Kaagbhusund's hermitage—the enquiry about a unique crow who was supposed to be wiser, more enlightened and knowledgeable about matters related to Lord Ram—has also now been satisfied. This is evident in Garud's lavish praises for Kaagbhusund in Doha no. 63-b.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 94-b where Garud has reiterated the same idea.]

अब श्रीराम कथा अति पावनि । सदा सुखद दुख पुंज नसावनि ॥ ३ ॥

सादर तात सुनावहु मोही । बार बार बिनवउँ प्रभु तोही ॥ ४ ॥

aba śrīrāma kathā ati pāvani. sadā sukhada dukha pun̄ja nasāvani. 3.
sādara tāta sunāvahu mōhī. bāra bāra binava'um̐ prabhu tōhī. 4.

Now my dear (aba -- tāta), narrate to me, with great respect and reverence, the divine story of Lord Ram which is most pure and holy, and which not only is always a provider of bliss, delight, happiness and joy unbound but also is a remover of the root of all sorts of grief, miseries, sorrows and torments of various hues. (3)

I most earnestly and reverentially request you repeatedly to narrate that story for my benefit¹. (4)

[Note—¹Garud requested the crow saint Kaagbhusund to narrate the life story of Lord Sri Ram so that he can see the light of wisdom and get peace at heart. This history is eternally delightful and a cure for all spiritual torments and sufferings.

After the initial formalities and exchange of courtesy, Garud now comes to the main purpose of his visit—which was to hear the divine story of Lord Ram. Lord Shiva had advised him that the only way by which he would be able to get rid of his confusions and restlessness was to live for a long time at a place where a saint lives, and hear the divine story of Lord Ram being narrated there. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede Doha no. 61.

The stupendous glories and the profundity of the spiritual importance of hearing the divine story of Lord Ram has been outlined in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 31—to Doha no. 32; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 6-7 that precede Doha no. 47; (iii) Doha no. 113—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 114.

Garud has ‘repeatedly’ (bāra bāra) prayed to Kaagbhusund to emphasise his eagerness, his earnestness and a strong desire to hear the story of Lord Ram. This is a very important point to note—the story of Lord Ram should be told only to those who are serious about it, and not to those who hear it for entertainment! This sanction is clearly implied when it is said that only those who find the company of saints very pleasant are eligible to hear the story of Lord Ram as stated in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-8 that precede Doha no. 128 because saints don’t talk about worldly matters.]

सुनत गरुड़ कै गिरा बिनीता । सरल सुप्रेम सुखद सुपुनीता ॥ ५ ॥

भयउ तासु मन परम उछाहा । लाग कहै रघुपति गुन गाहा ॥ ६ ॥

sunata garuṛa kai girā binītā. sarala suprēma sukhada supunītā. 5.
bhaya'u tāsū mana parama uchāhā. lāga kahai raghupati guna gāhā. 6.

Hearing these prayerful words of request from Garud, words that were honest and truthful, polite, affectionate, courteous and pleasant to hear (i.e. words that came from Garud’s heart and showed his sincerity of purpose and eagerness) [5]---

--- his (Kaagbhusund's) heart was filled with exhilaration. So he started the narration of the sacred story of Lord Ram, and the Lord's glories and divinity [6]. (5-6)

प्रथमहिं अति अनुराग भवानी । रामचरित सर कहेसि बखानी ॥ ७ ॥

पुनि नारद कर मोह अपारा । कहेसि बहुरि रावन अवतारा ॥ ८ ॥

प्रभु अवतार कथा पुनि गाई । तब सिसु चरित कहेसि मन लाई ॥ ९ ॥

prathamahim̐ ati anurāga bhavānī. rāmacarita sara kahēsi bakhānī. 7.

puni nārada kara mōha apārā. kahēsi bahuri rāvana avatārā. 8.

prabhu avatāra kathā puni gāī. taba sisu carita kahēsi mana lāī. 9.

{Lord Shiva, who is the original narrator of this divine story pertaining to sage Kaagbhusund's narration for the benefit of Garud as indicated earlier from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 52—to Doha no. 55, told Parvati, his divine consort who was also known by the name of Uma, as follows:- }

‘Oh Bhavani (one of the many names of Parvati, the divine consort of Shiva)! Kaagbhusund thus began his narration of the sacred story of Lord Ram with great reverence. In the beginning he most affectionately described the symbolic lake that contains the nectar of the divine story of Lord Ram that narrates the Lord's many deeds and the sportly activities that he undertook during his manifestation as a human being (rāmacarita sara)¹. (7)

Then he described the way Narad was deluded under the influence of the Lord's Maya (delusion-creating powers)², and this was followed by the story of the birth of Ravana (the king of the demon race and the ruler of their capital Lanka)³. (8)

After explaining the cause for the Supreme Lord's decision to assume a human form as Lord Ram (to eliminate the horrors caused to earth and all living beings by the demons led by Ravana)⁴, Kaagbhusund sang the story of the Lord's incarnation (descent upon the earth), and then he devoted his mind to recount cheerfully and with great interest the joy and the fun of the time when the Lord was a child, and the many happy events of that period associated with the childhood days in the life of the Lord⁵. (9)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 34—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 40.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 124—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 139.

Narad was very proud of his pedigree as he was the son of the Creator Brahma, was a great, learned and wise saint and sage, was very close to Lord Vishnu, and was one of the most trusted devotees of the Lord. The Lord wished to remove his sense of pride and ego, and make him realise that all the virtues he possesses are due to the Lord's grace upon him. So the Lord spread his maverick Maya, delusion and the funny tricks that it plays, on him. Narad, who had always prided himself for his self-

control and restraint over his sensual organs, fell in the trap of loving a girl and deciding to marry her at all costs. Lord Vishnu stage-managed the entire episode in such a way that when Narad could not fulfil his dreams he cursed Lord Vishnu, the very Lord who was his revered God and to whom he had vowed submission and devotion for life. Finally, when the Lord withdrew the shadow of his Maya, Narad realised his horrible mistake and begged the Lord for forgiveness.

³Refer: The story of Ravana and the birth of the demon race have been described in detail in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 153—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 184.]

⁴Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Doha no. 192—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 206.

Ravana spread terror in the entire universe—he spared neither the Gods in heaven nor the creatures on earth. Finally, fed-up and tormented endlessly, Mother Earth and all other Gods prayed to Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being, to provide them help and succour. The Lord promised them that he would come down to earth himself to eliminate this scourge.

⁵Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 191—to Doha no. 205.

See Doha no. 64 herein below.

Kaagbhusund was deeply absorbed in the narration so much so that his body was thrilled, his heart was filled with joy and affection for the Lord, and his mind was exhilarated.]

दो०. बालचरित कहि बिबिधि बिधि मन महँ परम उछाह ।
रिषि आगवन कहेसि पुनि श्रीरघुबीर बिबाह ॥ ६४ ॥

dōhā.

bālacarita kahi bibidhi bidhi mana maham̐ parama uchāha.
riṣi āgavana kahēsi puni śrīraghubīra bibāha. 64.

As Kaagbhusund narrated the many events associated with the childhood days of Lord Ram, he was exceedingly ecstatic in his Mana (heart and mind). He narrated the various pranks, joys and episodes during the childhood days of Lord Ram.

Then he narrated the story of sage Vishwamitra's arrival (at Ayodhya and taking Lord Ram and his younger brother Laxman with him to his hermitage with the aim of getting rid of the demons who were defiling his fire sacrifice)¹.

This was followed by the narration of the events that culminated in Lord Ram's marriage (with Sita at Janakpur)². (Doha no. 64)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 206—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 210.

Sage Vishwamitra's fire sacrifice was repeatedly defiled by the demons. Though the sage could have destroyed these demons himself but he desisted from doing so as becoming angry and killing someone during the progress of a fire sacrifice

would have disrupted it and nullified its good effects. So he decided to go to Ayodhya and bring Lord Ram and Laxman to protect his rituals and punish the demons.

King Dasrath was initially reluctant, but his chief priest, sage Vasistha, prevailed upon him and advised him to do what sage Vishwamitra wished. At the sage's hermitage, the Lord slayed the army of demons and helped Vishwamitra to successfully complete his sacrifice.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 210—to Doha no. 353.

The sage was very obliged and happy. He wanted to express his thanks to king Dasrath as well as reward Lord Ram and establish his fame in the whole world. So he took the two brothers to Janakpur where a bow-breaking ceremony was being held. It was to be attended by all the mighty kings and princes on earth at that time, and its objective was to marry Sita, the beautiful princess of the kingdom, to anyone who was able to break a 'bow'. This 'bow' was not an ordinary one; it was extremely heavy and strong as it belonged to Lord Shiva some time in the past. So it was not a joke to even lift it from its place in the ground, forget about bending it and breaking it!

All the assembled competitors failed—individually as well as in huge groups—to as much as move the bow by an inch. It was then that Lord Ram, on the instructions of sage Vishwamitra, lifted and broke the bow easily in front of the whole assembly. He thus became eligible to marry Sita. Later on, all the three brothers of Lord Ram, i.e. Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan, too were married to other sisters of Sita at the same venue.]

चौ०. बहुरि राम अभिषेक प्रसंगा । पुनि नृप बचन राज रस भंगा ॥ १ ॥

पुरबासिन्ह कर बिरह बिषादा । कहेसि राम लछिमन संबादा ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

bahuri rāma abhiṣēka prasaṅgā. puni nrpa bacana rāja rasa bhaṅgā. 1.
purabāsinha kara biraha biṣādā. kahēsi rāma lachimana sambādā. 2.

Then Kaagbhusund narrated the plans for anointing Lord Ram as Prince-Regent of the kingdom of Ayodhya by his father Dasrath, and the sudden interruption of the ceremonies due to his father's pledges given to his step mother Kaikeyi¹. (1)

Then he described the profound sorrows and agonies of the residents of Ayodhya when they learnt that their beloved Lord Ram is being exiled for fourteen years².

This was followed by the conversation between Lord Ram and his brother Laxman (who refused to stay back and insisted that he would accompany the Lord to the forest)³. (2)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 2—to Doha no. 40.

King Dasrath of Ayodhya wanted to crown Lord Ram on the throne of the kingdom. But if that happened, the main purpose of the Lord coming down to earth as a human being, viz. to eliminate the cruel demons and to bless the countless sages and hermits who had been doing severe Tapa, i.e. enduring so much hardship in order to attain the Lord, would be in doldrums. Because to achieve this objective it was

necessary for Lord Ram to wonder in the forest so that he could go and mingle with the sages and hermits and ascetics who lived isolated lives in secluded places strewn all over the countless forests. Then he had to eliminate Ravana keeping in mind the parameters of the boon that Brahma had granted him—and one implied immunity was that he could not be killed by an army of humans.

As a king of Ayodhya, even if Lord Ram wanted to fight Ravana to eliminate him it would not have been possible for him to do it alone, for he would be obliged to take an army along. That would defeat the very purpose as it would be against Brahma's boon for Ravana, and so the latter would have survived no matter how invincible Lord Ram's army might have been. The Lord must do it single-handedly to comply with the restrictions imposed by Brahma's boon for Ravana's death.

Hence, it was absolutely essential that some sort of obstacle is created and the Lord would be free to go to the forest to bless the many sages, hermits and ascetics who were waiting for him, and to move ahead to eliminate the demons in their own fort. This is the reason why the Lord used his famous Maya to create a situation where he was forced to a fourteen year exile.

Kaikeyi agreed to bear the ignominy for the rest of her life by becoming instrumental in the great Game that the Lord of the World decided to play, if that served the Lord's purpose! So she prevailed upon her husband, king Dasrath, to send the Lord to the forest. No one ever realised the immense personal sacrifice that Kaikeyi had made in this connection; everyone blamed her, even her own son Bharat never talked with her for the rest of his life. This is clearly said in Tulsidas' book "Geetawali", Uttar Kand, verse no. 37.

Only Lord Ram had known and acknowledged this secret of Kaikeyi's personal sacrifice, and he had always shown her the same respect that he had for her prior to the event of his being sent to the forest exile at her behest. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, line no. 4 of Doha no. 6; and Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 244 where the Lord made it a point to especially meet Kaikeyi and show his respect to her.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 46—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 51.

The subjects of Ayodhya loved Lord Ram very dearly. And so when the news spread that he was going to the forest, the whole city plunged in gloom and grief.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 70—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 76.

When Laxman, the Lord's younger brother, heard about the entire episode, he decided firmly that he would accompany him to the forest. The Lord initially tried to reason with him and persuade him to stay at home, but when he saw his determination he gave his consent.]

बिपिन गवन केवट अनुरागा । सुरसरि उतरि निवास प्रयागा ॥ ३ ॥

बालमीक प्रभु मिलन बखाना । चित्रकूट जिमि बसे भगवाना ॥ ४ ॥

bipina gavana kēvaṭa anurāgā. surasari utari nivāsa prayāgā. 3.
bālamīka prabhu milana bakhānā. citrakūṭa jimi basē bhagavānā. 4.

Then Kaagbhusund narrated how Lord Ram departed for the forest (for fourteen years)¹.

This was followed by the narration of the Lord meeting the boatman known as Kevat, and the latter's devotion and honour for the Lord. Then the Lord crossed the river Ganges on a boat rowed by the boatman².

After crossing river Ganges, the Lord stopped at many places till he reached a place called Prayag (which is situated on the confluence of the three holy rivers, Ganges, Jamuna and Saraswati) where he stayed for some time (in the hermitage of sage Bharadwaj) before resuming his journey onwards³. (3)

Thereafter, Kaagbhusund described the meeting between sage Valmiki and Lord Ram⁴, and how the Lord stayed at Chitrakoot⁵. (4)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Doha no. 79—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 100.

King Dasrath sent his chief minister, named Sumantra, with a chariot to pick up Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman as they walked towards the gate of the city to embark on their onwards journey to the forest. The three boarded this chariot in order to make a quick exit, but the grieving and weeping citizens thronged it and ran behind it from all sides, slowing its speed to a slow crawl. The Lord felt extremely pitiful and was overwhelmed with sadness, but did not know what to do. Eventually he had to tell Sumantra to take him out quietly in the darkness of the night when the tired citizens were sleeping on the ground. When they all woke up the next morning and found that the Lord had gone, they lamented grievously but had no choice except to return home and wait for the Lord's coming back at the end of the exile period.

Later on, Lord Ram asked Sumantra to return as well because they had reached the banks of the river Ganges, and the Lord had to cross it to the other side.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 100—to Doha no. 102.

To cross the river Ganges, Lord Ram asked the boatman to bring his boat, but the latter insisted that he be allowed to first wash the holy feet of the Lord before he took him on board his boat. The Lord obliged him, and the most fortunate boatman had the privilege of washing the Lord's holy feet and distributing this sanctified water to his entire clan that would help them all to attain liberation from their humdrum existence.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Doha no. 104—to Doha no. 109.

Lord Ram reached Prayag, the holy place where three sacred rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati meet. He bathed there and went to the hermitage of sage Bharadwaj before moving ahead and going to the next hermitage, that of sage Valmiki.

⁴Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 124—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 132.

Sage Valmiki was one of the greatest sages of the time. It was he who would pen the divine story of Lord Ram in his epic known world-wide as the famous "Ramayana". It was at his hermitage that Sita spent her last days and where Lord Ram's twin sons Lava and Kush were born.

During Lord Ram's communion with Valmiki, the sage had described some symbolic places where Lord Ram should reside. These places have immense spiritual significance as they advise a person to know how to attain the Lord in an easy and

accessible way. Valmiki then advised Lord Ram to go to Chitrakoot and live there for some time before resuming his onwards journey.

⁵Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Doha no. 132—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 142.

Chitrakoot was the first place where Lord Ram abided for some time in peace with his wife Sita and brother Laxman after leaving his capital Ayodhya. It was here that Bharat would come to try to persuade the Lord to return. This place was very beautiful with green forests and a river with its streams with sparkling clean waters. The place was inhabited by many sages, hermits and ascetics who benefited spiritually by the Lord's residence amidst them.]

सचिवागवन नगर नृप मरना । भरतागवन प्रेम बहु बरना ॥ ५ ॥
करि नृप क्रिया संग पुरबासी । भरत गए जहँ प्रभु सुख रासी ॥ ६ ॥

sacivāgavana nagara nr̥pa maranā. bharatāgavana prēma bahu baranā. 5.
kari nr̥pa kriyā saṅga purabāsī. bharata ga'e jaham̐ prabhu sukha rāsī. 6.

The chief minister of the kingdom (named Sumantra, who was sent by King Dasrath to accompany Lord Ram on a chariot during his departure from Ayodhya, with a mandate to try to persuade the Lord to return) came back to the capital (empty-handed, after dropping Lord Ram, his wife Sita and brother Laxman in the forest at a place where the borders of the kingdom of Ayodhya ended)¹.

When the King (Dasrath, the father of Lord Ram) heard that the minister has come back alone (which implied that Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita hadn't returned), he died out of shock and grief².

Then Kaagbhusund narrated Bharat's arrival back home (as he had been away at his maternal grandfather's place during the entire episode of Lord Ram being sent to exile by his crooked mother Kaikeyi)³, and described in different ways about Bharat's expression of undiluted and abundant feeling of love and affection for Lord Ram⁴. (5)

Bharat performed his father's last rites⁵, and accompanied by the residents of Ayodhya he went to Chitrakoot where Lord Ram resided at that time (to bring him back)⁶. (6)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 94—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 100; and (ii) Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 142—to Doha no. 147.

King Dasrath had sent his most trusted minister named Sumantra on a chariot to pick up the Lord from the outskirts of the city and take him to a far corner of the kingdom so that his words given to Kaikeyi could be fulfilled to some extent. Then, when they reach some far corner of the kingdom or some natural boundary such as a river or a mountain range, Sumantra was instructed to try to persuade the Lord to return home. But it so happened that the Lord refused, and he sent Sumantra back to Ayodhya. He returned with a heavy heart and a shamed face.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 148—to Doha no. 155.

When the king learnt that Sumantra has returned empty-handed, he grieved and died of agony of separation from Lord Ram.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 157—to Doha no. 158.

The throne of Ayodhya now lay vacant. So the chief priest named Vasistha sent a messenger and summoned Bharat and his younger brother Shatrughan who were at their maternal grandfather's place at that time. When the news reached Bharat and he saw the sombre face of the messengers, he became apprehensive that something was surely wrong. He packed up and came back to Ayodhya immediately, only to discover a city plunged in gloom and grieving gravely.

⁴Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 160—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 169; and (ii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 177—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 184.

Back home, Bharat came to know all about the nasty things that had unfolded in the household: his beloved brothers Ram and Laxman along with his sister-in-law Sita were sent to exile at the behest of his crooked mother Kaikeyi, and his father Dasrath was dead. Stunned and flummoxed beyond measure, he vehemently cursed his mother and wailed and grieved for the loss of Lord Ram, Laxman, Sita and Dasrath.

By all his words and actions Bharat made it amply clear to all that he had no role in this sad development, and that no one should ever question his integrity, and his loyalty and love for Lord Ram.

⁵Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 170—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 171.

However, many things had to be done now. First was the necessity of performing the last rites of king Dasrath whose body had been embalmed earlier. So Bharat did this ritual himself.

⁶Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 183—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 241.

Then a royal court was held to decide the next course of action: who would sit on the throne? Though everyone felt that Bharat should fill the gap and accept the crown at least as a temporary measure till the time Lord Ram came back at the end of his fourteen years of exile, but he flatly refused, saying that the crown and the throne rightly belonged to Lord Ram and he has nothing to do with it. He declared his intention of going to the forest and bringing the Lord back. This decision by him made him dear of the masses and removed all doubts in the mind of the citizens about Bharat's integrity. A huge party was assembled and the procession went to Chitrakoot in the forest where Lord Ram abided at that time.]

पुनि रघुपति बहुबिधि समुझाए । लै पादुका अवधपुर आए ॥ ७ ॥

भरत रहनि सुरपति सुत करनी । प्रभु अरु अत्रि भेंट पुनि बरनी ॥ ८ ॥

puni raghupati bahubidhi samujhā'ē. lai pādukā avadhapura ā'ē. 7.

bharata rahani surapati suta karani. prabhu aru atri bhēṇṭa puni barani. 8.

Lord Ram consoled Bharat and explained the complexities of the situation to him in all possible ways (and finally managed to convince Bharat that it is in the best of interests of all that the Lord be allowed to complete his term of fourteen years in the forest, and in the meantime Bharat could use Lord Ram's footwear as his symbolic presence in Ayodhya)¹.

Thereafter, Bharat returned to Ayodhya bringing with him Lord Ram's sandals (a wooden footwear)². (7)

Kaagbhusund described the way Bharat lived at Ayodhya. [Bharat had put these sandals on the throne of Ayodhya, and he himself retired to a place on the outskirts of the city to lead an austere life like that of a hermit.]³

He then continued with his narration, describing the episode involving the son of the King of Gods (Indra; the son's name was Jayant)⁴.

He then described the meeting between Lord Ram and sage Atri⁵. (8)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 304—to Doha no. 308; and (ii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 313—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 316.

Bharat tried his level best to try to persuade Lord Ram to return. The Lord explained the complexity of the situation and somehow made Bharat relent. Bharat agreed and said that if it is the Lord's wish, so be it.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 316—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 322.

As a token of the Lord's return and be crowned on the throne, Bharat brought the Lord's wooden sandals and put them on the throne of Ayodhya.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 323—to Sortha/Doha no. 326.

After that, Bharat retired to a place on the outskirts of the city and lived there an exemplary life of a hermit for the entire duration of the period of fourteen years while Lord Ram stayed in the forest.

⁴Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 1—to Doha no. 2.

Indra's son, named Jayant, was very crooked, unruly and mischievous like his father, and behaved like a prince of a king who himself is of an evil and jealous mind. He wanted to tease Sita and test the powers of Lord Ram. So he disguised himself as a crow and went and pricked Sita. Lord Ram was angry, but the Lord is so merciful that instead of immediately killing Jayant he shot a reed at him so that he is inflicted some injury as a punishment, but not killed. Jayant ran for his life everywhere in the universe, but this arrow-like reed followed him in hot pursuit. Finally he met sage Narad who advised him to go and ask for forgiveness from the Lord himself, for no one in this creation can give shelter to someone who opposes the Lord.

Jayant came and pleaded for his life with the Lord who obviously excused him, but the Lord decided that such evil persons need to be punished. So he made Jayant 'one-eyed' so that he would be recognised and scorned by everyone for his evil nature.

⁵Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 3—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 7.

Realising that his presence in Chitrakoot will not serve his purpose any more as this location had been known by all by this time and the Lord could not live incognito any more, he decided to move ahead.

He reached the hermitage of sage Atri who lovingly welcomed the Lord and paid his obeisance to him. It was here that the sage's wife Anusuiya had preached Sita, Lord Ram's wife, about the principles that ought to be followed by a righteous wife. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 5 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-19 that precede it.]

दो०. कहि बिराध बध जेहि बिधि देह तजी सरभंग ।

बरनि सुतीछन प्रीति पुनि प्रभु अगस्ति सतसंग ॥ ६५ ॥

dōhā.

kahi birādha badha jēhi bidhi dēha tajī sarabhaṅga.
barani sūtīchana prīti puni prabhu agasti satasaṅga. 65.

After giving an account of the death of Viradha (a demon who was slayed by Lord Ram in the forest)¹ and the way sage Sarbhanga left his mortal coil (i.e. the way the sage left his body by a self-kindled fire of Yoga after meeting the Lord)², he (Kaagbhusund) proceeded to describe the love and devotion of sage Sutikshan for the Lord³, and then the holy communion sage Agasta had with the Lord⁴. (Doha no. 65)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-7 that precede Doha no. 7.

Moving ahead from Atri's hermitage, the Lord met a demon named Viradha. He killed the demon, and finding that he was sorrowful the Lord provided him deliverance.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 7—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 9.

Sage Sarbhanga was spiritually overwhelmed by his meeting with Lord Ram. He felt ecstatic and lovingly prayed to the Lord before leaving his gross body by burning it in a self-kindled fire of Yoga, thereby attaining emancipation and salvation.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 10—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 12.

The next sage the Lord met was Sutikshan. When he heard that his beloved Lord Ram was coming that way where he lived, the sage was totally exhilarated with joy unbound, and he ran thither to meet the Lord in a state of trance, tears spilling from his eyes and body utterly thrilled and beyond his control. He began to dance and sing in ecstasy and jubilation. Then when the climax was reached he went into a 'Samadhi', a trance-like state of meditation and deep reflection, when he sat motionless on the ground, lost in thoughts of the Lord. The Lord thoroughly enjoyed this scene and did not wish to disturb the sage. So for quite some time the Lord hid himself behind a tree, watching Sutikshan's extremely blissful state of spiritual exultation. Eventually, the Lord woke him up, and the sage fell down at his feet. After praying to the Lord and submitting himself to him, the sage accompanied him to the hermitage of sage Agastya.

⁴Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 12—to Chaupai line no. 18 that precedes Doha no. 13.

It was sage Agastya who advised Lord Ram to move on in the direction of the ‘Dandak’ forest and live there at a place called ‘Panchavati’ where many other sages and hermits abided. It is narrated herein below.]

चौ०. कहि दंडक बन पावनताई । गीध मइत्री पुनि तेहिं गाई ॥ १ ॥

पुनि प्रभु पंचवटीं कृत बासा । भंजी सकल मुनिन्ह की त्रासा ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

kahi daṇḍaka bana pāvanatāī. gīdha ma'itrī puni tēhiṁ gāī. 1.

puni prabhu pañcabaṭīṁ kṛta bāsā. bhañjī sakala muninha kī trāsā. 2.

After telling Garud about the purification of Dandak-forest by the Lord by the virtue of his staying there for some time¹, Kaagbhusund narrated the friendship between Lord Ram and the Vulture (known as Jatau)². (1)

Thereafter, he narrated the way the Lord stayed at the Panchavati forest and freed all the sages who abided there from their agonies and torments^{3#} (2).

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 16 that precedes Doha no. 13.

This forest was earlier cursed, and as a result it was un-inhabited. The Lord's passage through it and his stay at a Panchavati cured this place of the curse and made it vibrant with life once again.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, line no. 1 of Doha no. 13.

This vulture would later on sacrifice his life to protect Sita while she was being abducted by the demon king Ravana. To honour his friendship with Jatau who was old like the Lord's own father, the Lord performed his last rite with his own hands. See Chaupai line no. 7 herein below.

Thus, Jatau managed to get that rarest of rare end which not even the greatest of sages and hermits, and not even king Dasrath, the Lord's worldly father, had the privilege to get. This is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 29—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 33.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, 2nd line of Doha no. 13 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 15, 17-18, and Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that follow this Doha.

#It ought to be noted that ‘Panchavati’ was a pleasant place surrounded by greenery in the middle of the dense forest known as ‘Dandak’ which was uninhabitable in general. The word ‘Panchavati’ means a cluster of ‘five trees’. These trees were on the banks of the river Godavari; they were huge and provided a perfect place for rest. Here, Lord Ram and his wife Sita and brother Laxman lived in a thatched hut under the combined shade of these five trees.

When sage Agastya had advised Lord Ram to go to the Dandak forest and stay at Panchavati, he had told the Lord that many sages who lived there would also benefit by having a rare chance to meet the Lord and find redemption for their souls. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 15-17 that precede Doha no. 13.]

पुनि लछिमन उपदेस अनूपा । सूपनखा जिमि कीन्हि कुरूपा ॥ ३ ॥

खर दूषन बध बहुरि बखाना । जिमि सब मरमु दसानन जाना ॥ ४ ॥

puni lachimana upadēsa anūpā. sūpanakhā jimi kīnhi kurūpā. 3.

khara dūṣana badha bahuri bakhānā. jimi saba maramu dasānana jānā. 4.

Then, Kaagbhusund described the way Lord Ram taught his brother Laxman on some wonderful metaphysical concepts in a comprehensive but simple way¹. This was followed by the narration of the event when the demoness known as Supernakha was mutilated². (3)

He went on to narrate the slaying of the demons known as Khar and Dushan (along with their armies) by the Lord³, and the way the demon king Ravana (of Lanka) came to learn about all these developments⁴. (4)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 114—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 17.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 17—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 18.

Supernakha was a sister of Ravana, the demon king of Lanka. She was a very lustful female demon, and when she saw the charming form of Lord Ram she was overcome by passion. She assumed a form of a beautiful damsel and approached the Lord with a proposal of marriage, which obviously the Lord refused. Being spurned and rebuked, Supernakha became violent and wished to kill Sita, the Lord's wife. So he asked Laxman to chop-off her ears and nose as a symbolic warning to other such lascivious ladies to mind their own business and leave upright males alone. This incident was the spark that lit the fire that culminated in the ferocious war of Lanka that finally led to the killing of the cruel demons and their king Ravana.

The word 'Supernakha' refers to a female demon who had sharp, long nails, and ears extremely large like a fan or like that of an elephant.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 18—to Doha no. 20.

Khar and Dushan were the commanders of the demon army and cousins of Supernakha. This army was ordained to look after the interest of the demons in the area where the Dandak forest was situated to ensure that no sage or hermit successfully performed any fire sacrifice that would empower them to kill the demons. When mutilated, Supernakha rushed to these two and complained. Taking this as an open insult and challenge, they rushed to attack the Lord with a vicious blood-thirsty demon army. In the end, all of them were killed by Lord Ram alone.

⁴Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 21—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 23.

When the entire demon army was decimated, Supernakha dashed to Lanka and reported the events to her brother Ravana. He was stunned and became pensive. He began to wonder who this gentleman was who would be powerful, strong, bold and courageous enough to rebuff Supernakha and provoke the demons. Surely everything was not fine. He had his strong reservations in the beginning and did not want to pick up a fight. But Supernakha applied all her tricks and persuaded Ravana to save the face of the demon race: say, what will the world say, that Ravana could not even protect the dignity and respect of his own sister? This would certainly undermine his fame and authority in the world, and especially in the demon race; it will be a loss of face like no other event. Thus instigated, Ravana decided to face the challenge.]

दसकंधर मारीच बतकही । जेहि बिधि भई सो सब तेहिं कही ॥ ५ ॥
पुनि माया सीता कर हरना । श्रीरघुबीर बिरह कछु बरना ॥ ६ ॥

dasakandhara mārīca batakahī. jēhi bidhi bha'ī sō saba tēhim kahī. 5.
puni māyā sītā kara haranā. śrīraghubīra biraha kachu baranā. 6.

Then, Kaagbhusund described in detail the conversation between Ravana and Marich as it took place¹. (5)

Then he went on to narrate how an illusionary form or a shadowy image of Sita was abducted (by Ravana)², and a little of Lord Ram's grief, desolation and lamentations at her loss was also described by him³. (6)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 23—to Doha no. 26.

Ravana went to one of his close confidantes, a demon named Marich. He lived on an island in the middle of the ocean ever since he was flung there by Lord Ram with a headless arrow at the time Marich was trying to defile the fire sacrifice of sage Vishwamitra. Marich lived in awe of the Lord and repeated his holy name out of fear ever since. But the mystery of this holy name of the Lord is such that though Marich repeated it out of fear but it made him eligible for salvation and emancipation. Ravana using him as a tool to kidnap Sita was merely an excuse whereby Marich would have a second divine glimpse of Lord Ram before leaving his mortal coil to obtain deliverance at the hands of the Lord himself when he would be shot by the latter.

So, as it happened, Marich tried his best to dissuade Ravana from antagonising Lord Ram, but fate had other things planned. Ravana threatened to kill Marich if he did not comply with his request to become a deer with a golden skin so that the former could abduct Sita, Lord Ram's wife, to avenge Supernakha's mutilation. Dangled between the devil and the deep sea, Marich decided that it was better to die at the hands of the Lord than being tortured and killed by this evil fellow Ravana. So he agreed.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 27—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 29.

When Sita saw the golden-skinned deer roaming near her hermitage, she asked Lord Ram to bring it to her so that she could keep it in hermitage. The all-knowing Lord knew the Divine Plan: he knew that this was the beginning of the end of the ferocious demon Ravana for which he had descended from the heaven at the request of the Gods. To ensure that the chastity of Sita would not be compromised, the Lord created, out of his Maya, i.e. his delusion creating powers, a shadow-like Sita that was exactly a replica of her original self. The original Sita was hidden in the fiery glow of Yoga, the stupendous dazzling fire that is generated by meditation. In practical terms, it is believed that she assumed a disembodied body as her soul left her gross body and reverted to its original subtle form as the 'pure consciousness' that has no physical identity and is invisible. This is clearly mentioned in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 24.

So in effect, what Ravana took away was only a 'shadow' of Sita.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-17 that precede Doha no. 30.

Lord Ram had to make a great show of ignorance and act like a perfect human being so that Ravana did not get a wind of who actually he was. This is because Ravana was a highly learned soul, and he knew that one day he too would have to die like all living beings irrespective of the boons he had extracted from Brahma, the creator, that no ordinary person would be able to kill him. Besides this, he had control over the entire universe at that point of time, so it is reasonable to assume that he was also aware of the promise Lord Vishnu had made to the Gods—i.e. that the Lord would himself come down to earth to get rid of the menace of Ravana. This thing—whether or not this man known as Ram is Lord Vishnu himself who has come to kill Ravana—was weighing very heavily on the mind of Ravana, though he was not certain what the reality was. This is clear in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 23.

Therefore it was the need of the hour for Lord Ram to keep his identity secret and Ravana confused. Otherwise, if Ravana got the wind that Ram is Lord Vishnu, he would either surrender unconditionally before the Lord or flee and hide somewhere to become untraceable. In the former case, i.e. if he surrendered, Lord Ram would be duty-bound to forgive him, as it would be totally dishonourable to kill someone who has surrendered. Should this happen, the very purpose of the Lord's entire journey to earth would be nullified and made void. Who knows that after escaping death and when the Lord goes away, Ravana would not revert back to his old ugly ways? It was not a chance that could be taken by the Lord.

So, Lord Ram decided to act like an ordinary man whose wife was kidnapped by someone in the forest: he wailed and grieved and wept and lamented profusely so that any spy of the demons who was put on watch, would go and report to Ravana that Sita's husband is an ordinary man like any other. And therefore, there was no cause of bother or worry for the demon king on that count.]

पुनि प्रभु गीध क्रिया जिमि कीन्ही । बधि कबंध सबरिहि गति दीन्ही ॥ ७ ॥

बहुरि बिरह बरनत रघुबीरा । जेहि बिधि गए सरोबर तीरा ॥ ८ ॥

puni prabhu gīdha kriyā jimi kīnhī. badhi kabandha sabarihi gati dīnhī. 7.
bahuri biraha baranata raghubīrā. jēhi bidhi ga'e sarōbara tīrā. 8.

Thereafter, Kaagbhusund described the way Lord Ram performed the last rites of the Vulture king (Jatau)¹, and then how he slayed the demon named Kabandha³ and went ahead on his way to the hermitage of Sabari (the old tribal woman) where the Lord provided her salvation and emancipation³. (7)

Then Kaagbhusund described the way Lord Ram wailed and grieved for Sita as he wended his way onwards in the forest⁴. The Lord finally went to a pleasant lake called Pampa which abounded in natural beauty, and where he took rest for some time under the shade of a leafy tree⁵. (8)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 29 along with Chaupai line nos. 7-26 that precede it, and from Chaupai line no. 18 that precedes Doha no. 30—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 33.

As has been said earlier in Chaupai line no. 1 herein above, Jatau, the Vulture, was promised friendship by Lord Ram. Jatau kept his part of the bargain by laying down his life in a valiant attempt to save Sita from being kidnapped by Ravana. When Lord Ram came that way where Jatau lay writhing in pain and murmuring the holy name of the Lord, the Lord showered his love on him by picking him up in his arms, cleaning his wounds with his own hands, and showing great respect and gratitude to him. But Jatau's wounds were so serious that he could not survive. When he died, Lord Ram performed his last rites in the same way he would have done for his own father. This at once catapulted Jatau to an exalted position and gave him a privilege that not even the greatest of sages and hermits obtained any time in history.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 33—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 34.

Kabandha was a Gandharva, a sort of demi-God, who was turned into a demon by the curse of sage Durbasa. Lord Ram liberated him from this curse and his soul went to the heaven in accordance with his destiny.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 34—to Doha no. 36.

Sabari was an old tribal woman who had great devotion for Lord Ram. She had been living alone in the forest in the hope that one day she would be able to have a communion with her beloved Lord before discarding her mortal coil. As the word spread in the forest that Lord Ram has arrived and was moving around blessing and interacting with the many sages and hermits who lived there, Sabari's spirit lifted and she longed for the moment when the Lord would come visiting her. So when he did come, Sabari was extremely excited. Her love and devotion for the Lord knew no bounds; she offered him plums she had carefully picked up and stored for this moment. At the time of his departure, Sabari left her mortal coil by burning her gross body in a self-lit fire of Yoga and thereby allowing her soul to find emancipation and salvation. Like in the case of Jatau, Lord Ram performed her last rites with his own hands like the way he would have done for his own mother.

⁴Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 37—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 39.

After providing liberation and deliverance to Sabari, Lord Ram moved ahead in the direction of the Pampa lake as advised by her. His mental state of grief and sadness at the loss of his wife Sita has been described in the verses referred to herein above.

⁵Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 39—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 41.

By-and-by, the Lord arrived at the lake called Pampa. It was a fascinating place with verdant greenery all around and a fresh-water lake on one side. The tired Lord Ram and his brother Laxman took a bath here and rested under the shade of tree for some time. It was here that sage Narad came to meet the Lord as described herein below.]

दो०. प्रभु नारद संबाद कहि मारुति मिलन प्रसंग ।
पुनि सुग्रीव मिताई बालि प्रान कर भंग ॥ ६६ (क) ॥
dōhā.

prabhu nārada sambāda kahi māruti milana prasaṅga.
puni sugrīva mitā'ī bālī prāna kara bhaṅga. 66 (a).

Then Kaagbhusund narrated Lord Ram's conversation with sage Narad¹, his meeting with Hanuman, son of the Wind-God², his friendship with Sugriv (the exiled prince of the monkey kingdom)³, and the slaying of (Sugriv's brother) Bali⁴. (Doha no. 66-a)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 41—to Chanda line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 46.

When Lord Ram and Laxman were resting under the shade of a tree on the banks of the Pampa lake, all the Gods came and prayed to the Lord. After all of them went to their respective abodes and the Lord was alone, sage Narad came to meet him. The sage was very sorry that the Lord has had to suffer so much because of his curse. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 136—to Doha no. 137.}

Sage Narad came to Lord Ram, paid his respects and prayed to him, and then asked the Lord to tell him why he had not allowed him (Narad) to marry when he had a desire to do so. After that, the sage asked the Lord to outline the characters and qualities of true saints. The Lord's answer satisfied him and he went his way.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 1—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 4.

Moving ahead in the direction of Lanka, Lord Ram and Laxman arrived near Mt. Rishyamook where Sugriv lived on its summit with his few trusted companions after he was ejected from the monkey kingdom of Kishkindha by his elder brother Baali due to some misunderstanding between the two.

When Sugriv saw two strangers wondering below, he wondered who they were; are they spies sent by Baali? So he sent his trusted friend Hanuman, who was the son of the Wind-God, to go and investigate. Hanuman came to Lord Ram disguised as a Brahmin, and discovered to his joy that the stranger was none else but his true Lord Ram for whose arrival he had been waiting for so long. He fell at the

feet of the Lord and the two embraced each other. Later on it would turn out that Hanuman would be the most trusted and dearest of devotees of the Lord in future.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Doha no. 4 along with Chaupai line nos. 2-8 that precede it.

Hanuman took Lord Ram and Laxman to the top of the mountain and forged a friendship between Sugriv and Lord Ram. Both empathised with each other as both had suffered the same fate: they were exiled from their respective kingdoms, and were suffering the agony of separation from their wives. Sugriv's wife was kept by his brother Baali when he threw him out of the kingdom.

⁴Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 6—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 11.

When Lord Ram heard the story of Sugriv and found that grave injustice was done to him, then like a true friend should do, the Lord decided to help Sugriv by eliminating his jealous brother and restoring his right to the throne of Kishkindha. This eventually led to the killing of Baali. Since Baali had prayed to Lord Ram and asked for mercy and forgiveness at the time of his death, the Lord provided him deliverance and sent him to his own abode in the heaven.]

कपिहि तिलक करि प्रभु कृत सैल प्रबरषन बास ।
बरनन बर्षा सरद अरु राम रोष कपि त्रास ॥ ६६ (ख) ॥

kapihi tilaka kari prabhu kṛta saila prabaraṣana bāsa.
baranana barṣā sarada aru rāma rōṣa kapi trāsa. 66 (b).

Lord Ram anointed Sugriv as King of Kishkindha¹ and himself took up residence on the summit of a mountain known as Prabarshan². Then followed an account of the rainy and autumn seasons during which the Lord lived on this mountain³, and Lord Ram's anger at Sugriv (when the Lord observed that the latter had done nothing to search for the whereabouts of Sita as promised in the beginning of their friendship)⁴. (Doha no. 66-b)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Doha no. 11 along with Chaupai line nos. 9-10 that precede it.

Lord Ram kept his promise and appointed Sugriv on the throne of Kishkindha.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Doha no. 12 along with Chaupai line nos. 7-10 that precede it.

After that, the Lord spent the rainy and the autumn seasons on Mt. Prabarshan. He kept his vows of living like a hermit in a forest environment for fourteen years by refusing to enter the city of Kishkindha though Sugriv would have cheerfully hosted him.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 13—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 18.

These verses excellently describe in poetic finery the beauty of Nature during the two seasons: the rainy and the autumn.

⁴Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 18—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 21.

Lord Ram was annoyed that once Sugriv got back his kingdom he had all but forgotten the promises he had made to the Lord—that he would do his best to find where Sita was. So the Lord sent Laxman to reprimand Sugriv and make him come to his senses. Sugriv realised his mistake, said he was sorry, asked for forgiveness, and assembled a huge army of messengers and spies to go and trace Sita. This is narrated below.]

चौ०. जेहि बिधि कपिपति कीस पठाए । सीता खोज सकल दिसि धाए ॥ १ ॥

बिबर प्रबेस कीन्ह जेहि भाँती । कपिन्ह बहोरि मिला संपाती ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

jēhi bidhi kapipati kīsa paṭhā'ē. sītā khōja sakala disi dhā'ē. 1.

bibara prabēsa kīnha jēhi bhāmṭī. kapinha bahōri milā sampātī. 2.

Kaagbhusund then continued his narration, describing how the monkey king sent his messengers or scouts in all directions in search of Sita¹ [1], and how the group sent towards the south entered a cave² and emerged from there to meet Sampati (vulture Jatau's brother)³ [2]. (1-2)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Doha no. 21—to Doha no. 23.

Hundreds of thousands of monkeys and bears assembled for the purpose. They were directed to go in every direction of the earth and search for Sita. It is to be noted here especially that these messengers or scouts were most suitable for the job as the extended forested areas of the earth were a part of their natural habitat and they were well acquainted with the geography and topography of these places. Natural obstacles such as mountains, rivers and forests and their wild animals and intractable paths were no problems for them. Obviously, they were far better qualified in this search than humans would have been.

One such group led by Angad, Hanuman and Jamvant, the bear king, headed towards the south. Eventually, this group would reach the edge of the ocean across which lay the fort of Lanka in the middle of the vast ocean that stretched beyond.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 24—to Doha no. 25.

Exhausted, hungry and thirsty, this latter group was searching for water to drink. Hanuman located a cave from which emerged playful swans, herons and chirping birds with wet wings; many were hovering over the mouth of the cave ready to enter it, and many others were emerging from it.

The thirst group deduced that surely there was a fresh water source inside. So they gingerly picked their way in it and at its end saw a wonderful garden where they met a hermitress who told them the way out of the cave which would take them straight to the shore of the ocean across which lay Lanka. Meanwhile, the group refreshed itself by drinking and bathing in the fresh water-body inside the cave and eating sweet fruits that were there in abundance. The hermitress herself went to Lord

Ram, prayed to the Lord, and on his instructions went to the northern mountains to do meditation and austerities at a holy place called Badrinath.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 27—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 29.

The hermitress had told the group of monkeys and bears to close their eyes so that she could transport them by her transcendental powers to the edge of the ocean. When the group opened its eyes they found themselves there, with the ocean spreading like a formidable obstacle before them. All of them sat down in dismay and gloom, and an abject sense of hopelessness and failure overcame them. Meanwhile, Sampati, who was an old vulture and the elder brother of Jatau, saw the dejected group of monkeys and bears and thought that when they died he would have a great feast.

The terrified group loudly invoked Jatau's sacrifices for the cause of Lord Ram even as they implored Sampati to spare them as they were also on the Lord's mission. When Sampati heard the full story, he felt sorry for them, and in order to do his bit to help in the Lord's mission, he told them about the location of Sita in Lanka. This was made possible as vultures have the uncanny ability to see long distances. Then Sampati went his way where the king of birds Garud, the mount of Lord Vishnu, resided—i.e. to the heaven.]

सुनि सब कथा समीरकुमारा । नाघत भयउ पयोधि अपारा ॥ ३ ॥

लंकाँ कपि प्रबेस जिमि कीन्हा । पुनि सीतहि धीरजु जिमि दीन्हा ॥ ४ ॥

sunī saba kathā samīrakumārā. nāghata bhaya'u payōdhi apārā. 3.
laṅkāṁ kapi prabēsa jimi kīnhā. puni sītahi dhīraju jimi dīnhā. 4.

Upon hearing all the news (from Sampati, about Sita's location at Lanka), the son of the Wind God (i.e. Hanuman) jumped over the vast ocean¹. (3)

Kaagbhusund then described how he entered Lanka², and then, how he met and re-assured Sita³. (4)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 30—to Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 3.

No one in the group of monkeys and bears had the ability to cross the vast gap of the ocean between its northern edge where they were currently seated and the place where the island of Lanka was situated—a distance of roughly 100 Yojans, which means approximately 800 miles. {Refer: Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 29.}

Jamvant, the old king of bears, knew who actually Hanuman was, i.e. that he was the son of the Wind-God, and therefore he had, for one, the ability to fly in the air like a bird, and secondly, he possessed an incomparable strength that the powerful forces of wind possess. So Jamvant requested Hanuman to pick up the challenge and do his might to serve the purpose of the Lord. This way he would get unparalleled fame and glory in the world personally, and bring laurels to the group in general.

The brave Hanuman recalled the purpose of his descent on earth, and immediately embarked on this sacred venture by assuming a huge form and launching

himself from a high hill like a modern-day missile. He sailed across the sky over the choppy waters of the mighty ocean. On the way to Lanka however, he met and easily overcame some obstacles that were created by the demon commanders who had posted guards in the ocean to prevent any intruder from entering the city of Lanka.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 3—to Doha no. 5.

Finally, Hanuman landed on the soil of Lanka. There he met Lankini, a female demon who was tasked to guard the main entrance to the fort. A single blow from Hanuman's clenched fist made her vomit blood. She realised that he was not an ordinary intruder but someone with an extraordinary authority and power to fulfil the mandate of the Creator. So she blessed him and quietly allowed him in.

Then the wise Hanuman assumed a form of a small mosquito to avoid detection, and freely roamed in the city of Lanka, looking at all its nooks and corners to find where Sita might be. It was night time, and everyone was asleep. He peered in all the houses of the demons, and even in the royal palace of Ravana to investigate Sita's whereabouts, but failed.

When it was nearly dawn, he located a small house that bore the name of Lord Ram on its walls, and from inside it he heard someone muttering the holy name. He marvelled at this astonishing sight which was an incongruity in the middle of the city of demons, and determined to explore further. He knocked at the door and to his amazement he discovered that it was the home of a devotee of Lord Ram whose name was Vibhishan, and who happened to be a younger brother of Ravana, the demon king. The two were mutually astonished at this meeting, and thanked the Lord for this coincidence. After preliminary exchange of greetings and pleasantries, Vibhishan asked Hanuman the purpose of his visit, and when he was told about it he disclosed the exact location of Sita to Hanuman: that she was confined to a garden called 'Ashok Van'.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 4—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 17.

Hanuman took his leave from Vibhishan and went and hid himself on a huge leafy tree under the shade of which sat Sita, forlorn, distressed, emaciated and grieving. She was surrounded by female guards. Just at that time Ravana came and threatened Sita with death if she remained stubborn and refused to surrender herself before him. Hanuman watched silently, seething with anger, and his determination to eliminate the scourge of the demons became all the more firm.

When Ravana left fretting and fuming, Hanuman dropped the signet ring that the Lord had given him as a token for recognition by Sita, that he was a genuine messenger from the Lord himself and not some imposter. Sita was apprehensive in the beginning, but in due course of time she realised that Hanuman was indeed the Lord's faithful devotee, and then she profusely blessed him. Hanuman assured her that the Lord is coming soon with a huge army of monkeys and bears to free her from her captivity. But she would have to have patience and courage, and bear with some more sufferings till the Lord arrives.]

बन उजारि रावनहि प्रबोधी । पुर दहि नाघेउ बहुरि पयोधी ॥ ५ ॥

आए कपि सब जहँ रघुराई । बैदेही की कुसल सुनाई ॥ ६ ॥

bana ujāri rāvanahi prabōdhī. pura dahi nāghē'u bahuri payōdhī. 5.
ā'ē kapi saba jaham' raghurāī. baidēhī kī kusala sunāī. 6.

Then Kaagbhusund narrated how Hanuman ruined and laid to waste the magnificent garden of fruit trees where Sita was confined by Ravana¹, and how he exhorted Ravana to abandon his arrogance and evil wishes, and to ensure his own welfare as well of his clan he should free Sita and make truce with Lord Ram². [But having failed to persuade Ravana to come to his senses—] Then Hanuman burnt the city and reduced it to ashes³, and once again crossed the ocean to reach the other side (where his friends were eagerly waiting for his arrival)⁴. (5)

All the monkeys came back to where Lord Ram was waiting for them⁵, and they told Lord Ram the good news about Sita (that she has been traced and is still alive)⁶. (6)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 17—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 18.

Hanuman was very hungry, so he sought Sita's permission to eat the ripe sweet fruits from the trees that were abundant in the garden. Hanuman needed an excuse to punish Ravana and warn him of the fate that stared him in his face now onwards. He also wished to show-case his individual strength and valour to Sita in order to assure her of the combined might of the monkey army in case she had some reservations about the effectiveness of the Lord making a decision of facing a formidable enemy such as the demons with their king Ravana with a rag-tag army of humble monkeys and bears.

Once Sita granted her permission, Hanuman virtually went berserk in the garden and the orchard—uprooting trees, demolishing buildings, littering the place with ruins, and beating the guards black and blue. Terrified and at their wits end, the survivors rushed to report to Ravana about the havoc caused by a strange 'monkey'.

Ravana sent his son Akshakumar with his army of demons who were all killed by Hanuman. Stunned and angry, Ravana sent his other son Meghanad who, after taking a severe beating in the beginning, somehow managed to trap Hanuman in a snare and bring him to the court of Ravana.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 18—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 24.

There in the court of Ravana, Hanuman tried his best to persuade the demon king to abandon his reckless behaviour and to be sensible enough to free Sita and make peace with Lord Ram so that the demon race is saved from annihilation. But Ravana was arrogant and stubborn to the hilt. He would not listen.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 24—to Doha no. 26.

After a heated argument with Hanuman, Ravana ordered that his tail be wrapped in cloth dipped in oil and set on fire.

As the fire flared up, Hanuman made his body so small that it slipped out of the wrappings of cloth but only a tip of his tail remained stuck to one end of the blazing cloth so that he could drag it behind him. Then he leapt across the city, from building to building, market place to market place, from public squares to gardens to surrounding forests etc. that eventually ignited a huge fire across the length and

breadth of the great city of Lanka that reduced it to a smouldering heap of blackened rubble.

⁴Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 27—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 28.

Finally, Hanuman jumped into the ocean to douse the remaining part of the wrapped cloth that still clung to the end of his tail, cooled his body, and stood before Sita to take leave of her. Then he jumped over the waters of the roaring ocean with the same zeal and ease with which he had come to Lanka sometimes back, to reach the other side where his friends were anxiously waiting for him.

⁵Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 28—to Doha no. 29.

The ecstatic group had a celebration, and then they came back jubilantly to Kishkindha to report the good news to Sugriv, the king of the monkeys. Then they all went to Mt. Parbarshan where Lord Ram was staying at that time to report to him.

⁶Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 30—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 34.

The group's leader Jamvant, the bear king, briefed Lord Ram about the grand success of the mission, and that Sita had been found by Hanuman. Then the overwhelmed and grateful Lord thanked them all and affectionately embraced Hanuman, telling him that he would be indebted to him for the rest of his life. Hanuman briefly told him everything he had seen at Lanka and about the precarious condition of Sita, that though she was alive but she is living a life of hell. He urged the Lord not to waste any more time to start the final mission to free her and punish her tormentors.]

सेन समेति जथा रघुबीरा । उतरे जाइ बारिनिधि तीरा ॥ ७ ॥

मिला बिभीषन जेहि बिधि आई । सागर निग्रह कथा सुनाई ॥ ८ ॥

sēna samēti jathā raghubīrā. utarē jā'i bārinidhi tīrā. 7.

milā bibhīṣana jēhi bidhi ā'ī. sāgara nigrāha kathā sunā'ī. 8.

Kaagbhusund then narrated how Lord Ram collected and assembled the huge army (of monkeys and bears)¹ and went to pitch a camp on the ocean's shore². (7)

Then he described why and how Ravana's brother Vibhishan came to take refuge with the Lord³, and then proceeded to narrate why and how Lord Ram subjugated the mighty ocean⁴ (8).

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 34—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 35.

Lord Ram instructed Sugriv to assemble an army so that they can start for Lanka immediately. A huge and formidable army was collected at short notice, and it consisted of fierce monkeys and bears of all denominations from all the corners of the earth. The army was so huge that it stretched till the horizon.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 35 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 8-10 and Chanda line nos. 1-8.

As the Lord's army moved along the surface of the earth, a huge storm of dust was raised that blanketed the sky. The monkeys and bears roared and yelled defeaningly. The earth shook; the mountains swayed; the ocean swirled; the celestial holders of the earth, such as the Tortoise which is said to hold the earth on its back, the Diggajas (elephants) who hold the earth from its corners, and the Serpent who holds the earth on its hood, all of them squirmed and turned on their backs.

The Lord arrived on the northern edge of the ocean and pitched his camp there. The monkey and bear warriors roamed around eating fruits from the trees that existed anywhere in the vicinity.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 40—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 50.

Meanwhile at Lanka, there was panic ever since Hanuman had set it on fire and destroyed a substantial part of the demon army. The omens were not good. Amongst those who tried to convince Ravana that the line he had adopted would be ruinous for all of them was his brother Vibhishan. He tried to persuade Ravana to make peace with Lord Ram and return Sita to him. Ravana got provoked, accused Vibhishan of treachery and sedition, and kicked him out of Lanka. Fearing for his life, Vibhishan fled and came to seek refuge with Lord Ram, which was granted immediately and with a lot of warmth. The Lord went to the extent of symbolically anointing him on the throne of Lanka as its next king. This was a strategic move by the Lord to ensure Vibhishan's loyalty as well as a gesture to reward him for his services to the Lord.

⁴Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 50 along with Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precede it, and then from Doha no. 57—to Doha no. 59.

The next big hurdle was the ocean: the question was how to cross it and reach Lanka. Lord Ram did not want to insult the 'King of Water' as the ocean was known, and therefore tried to request him to give him passage through it. The Lord offered prayers to the ocean, but the latter was stubborn. So finally the Lord drew his arrow to dry it up forever. The marine creatures panicked and there was a huge turmoil in the waters of the ocean, forcing their Lord, the 'King of the Waters', to gather some gifts as a tribute and pray to Lord Ram to excuse him. Of course the Lord forgave him, and the Lord of the Ocean advised Lord Ram to construct a bridge across the surface of the water to connect to Lanka. He promised to Lord Ram that he would not wipe it away.]

दो०. सेतु बाँधि कपि सेन जिमि उतरी सागर पार ।

गयउ बसीठी बीरबर जेहि बिधि बालिकुमार ॥ ६७ (क) ॥

dōhā.

sētu bāmdhi kapi sēna jimi utarī sāgara pāra.

gaya'u basīṭhī bīrabara jēhi bidhi bālikumāra. 67 (a).

Kaagbhusund then narrated how the monkey army built a sturdy bridge and landed on the other side of the mighty ocean¹.

Then he narrated how the heroic son of Baali (i.e. Angad, the crown prince of Kishkindha) went as an envoy to the court of Ravana (because Lord Ram sent him as a last minute attempt to avoid a bloody war)². (Doha no. 67-a)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (i) Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 60; and (ii) Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 1—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 5; (iii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 11.

When the King of the Waters, i.e. the ocean in a personified form, appeared before Lord Ram to surrender and pay his tributes, the Lord asked him for a practical solution by which the vast army of monkeys would easily be able to cross the formidable stretch of fathomless and heaving body of water that spread before them. The ocean advised the Lord that there were two monkey brothers named Nal and Neel in the army who were blessed by a boon during their childhood days that even huge boulders as large as entire hills would float on the surface of water if they touched them. This boon should now be used to construct a bridge over the surface of the water of the ocean.

Thereafter, the army of hundreds and thousands of monkeys and bears got on the job in right earnest, bringing rocks, boulders and hills of all sizes and contours and throwing them on the surface of the water of the ocean. By the touch of Nal and Neel these rocks and boulders floated on the surface. It is also believed that Hanuman had scribbled the holy name of Lord Ram on each of these pieces of rocks and boulders so that they did not sink—because Hanuman knew about the glory and the stupendous mystical powers of the holy name of the Lord, that it is so powerful that it enables a creature to cross over this huge and most intractable ocean-like world of mundane existence without any effort and provides the creature's with deliverance, so he guessed that it would be no wonder if these inconsequential rocks and boulders too floated and allowed the army to cross over this physical ocean.

By-and-by, the bridge spanning the distance of 100 Yojans (roughly 800 miles or so) between the northern shore of the ocean and where it touched the soil of Lanka was established. Then Lord Ram offered his obeisance to Lord Shiva, his revered deity, before the army jubilantly advanced across this bridge. All the marine creatures emerged from the bottom of the ocean to marvel at this spectacle. The army finally landed on the other side and pitched camp on the slopes and summit of a hill by the name of Subel (refer: Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 11).

As promised, the ocean did not break the bridge.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 17—to Doha no. 35.

The always merciful, compassionate and forgiving Lord Ram was not interested in shedding blood unnecessarily. So he wished to explore the chances of avoiding the forthcoming ruinous war. A meeting was called and it was decided to send Angad as an emissary of the Lord to the court of Ravana in a last-ditch attempt to make a workable truce.

When Angad entered the city, the demon citizens of Lanka were scared out of their wits because they had not forgotten their bitter experience of a little while ago when Hanuman had gone berserk and wreaked havoc on them. So Angad got an easy right-of-way to the palace of the demon king Ravana where there was a heated and acrimonious exchange of angry words between him and Ravana. Each used insulting language for each other, and when Angad ultimately found that Ravana is not

amenable and is overcome by the shadow of death, he was so enraged that he put his foot firmly down on the ground in the name of Lord Ram with a challenge to Ravana that if he managed to move his leg it would be deemed that the latter has won the war!

One must be in awe of Angad's confidence in the 'self' as well as in the glory and divinity of Lord Ram that he did not think twice before making this vow. One must praise Angad for the fact that since he was on the side of the 'truth and righteousness' he was self-confident and convinced that no evil force would be ever able to as much as move his single hair, what to talk of moving his leg. It surely proves Angad's strong faith and firm belief in the supremacy of Lord Ram, in the power of the Lord's holy name, and in his personal devotion and dedication for the Lord that made him sure that whatever decision he would make would be accepted by the Lord without raising an eyebrow! Such is indeed the power that a devotee and a faithful follower of the Lord possesses that whatever actions and decisions he would take in the name of the Lord would never go wrong, and the Lord would endorse it.

Meanwhile, Ravana failed to move Angad's foot, and as he bowed down to touch Angad's foot, his crown fell on the ground. Angad kicked this crown so fiercely that it flew like a ball and landed at the place Lord Ram was seated. This single incidence of Ravana not being able to move Angad's foot and his crown falling to the ground was the proverbial last straw that broke the camel's back by demoralising the entire demon army and forewarning them of the impending disaster. Refer: Lanka Kand, (i) Doha no. 32 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 1-10; and (ii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 35.

In all sooth and without gainsay, this was a great moral victory for the whole of the monkey and bear army, and the most humiliating experience that the demons and Ravana had ever since they began ruling over the world.]

निसिचर कीस लराई बरनिसि बिबिधि प्रकार ।

कुंभकरन घननाद कर बल पौरुष संघार ॥ ६७ (ख) ॥

nisicara kīsa larāī baranisi bibidhi prakāra.

kumbhakarana ghananāda kara bala pauruṣa saṅghāra. 67 (b).

Thereafter the war between the demons (Ravana's army) and monkeys (Ram's army) was described in detail and in different ways¹.

Kumbhakaran (the brother of Ravana)² and Meghnad (his son)³ were eventually killed in battle. (Doha no. 67-b).

[Note—¹The no-holds-barred ferocious and blood-curdling war between the two sides has been extensively described in Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 39—to Doha no. 103.

²The death of Kumbhakaran has been described in Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 62—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 71.

Kumbhakaran was a younger brother of Ravana, and elder to Vibhishan. When Laxman was revived after being severely wounded by Meghnad, Ravana was alarmed. He went and woke up Kumbhakaran from his slumber and briefed him about

the events. It so happened that Kumbhakaran was unaware of the whole thing till that point of time as he was accustomed to eating and drinking heavily and sleeping for long periods at a stretch. When he came to know about the developments, he admonished Ravana and told him that whatever he had done was wrong. However, Kumbhakaran said that he would be loyal to the demon race and fight on its behalf although it was wrong to do so. Then followed a fierce battle between Kumbhakaran and Lord Ram, and it culminated in the former's death. At the time of his death, Kumbhakaran's soul emerged from inside his body and entered the body of Lord Ram in the form of a bright shaft of light (refer: Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 71 of Lanka Kand).

The only other demon that had this privilege whereby his soul merged with the Supreme Soul of this creation in a visible way was Ravana himself (refer: Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 103 of Lanka Kand).

³The death of Meghanad has been described in Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 72—to Doha no. 76.

Meghanad was the son of Ravana. He was a valorous and virtually invincible demon warrior who had even captured Indra, the king of gods. He got his name from the fact that when he roared or yelled it was so deafening that it sounded like the clap of thunder. It was he who had shot and wounded Laxman. After the latter was revived he once again challenged Meghanad, and in the ensuing battle that saw Meghanad employing magical tricks, the final victory was won by Laxman who shot and killed his enemy Meghanad.]

चौ०. निसिचर निकर मरन बिधि नाना । रघुपति रावन समर बखाना ॥ १ ॥

रावन बध मंदोदरि सोका । राज बिभीषन देव असोका ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

nisicara nikara marana bidhi nānā. raghupati rāvana samara bakhānā. 1.
rāvana badha mandōdari sōkā. rāja bibhīṣana dēva asōkā. 2.

Continuing with his narration, Kaagbhusund then described the extermination of the army of demons, and the battle between Lord Ram & Ravana¹. (1)

This battle and the war in general ended with the slaying of Ravana². Then he narrated how Mandodari, the queen of the demon race and the wife of Ravana, lamented, wailed and grieved upon learning of the demise of her husband³.

The crown and the throne of Lanka was given to Vibhishan who was made the King (as promised earlier by Lord Ram)⁴, and then Kaagbhusund described the scene of celebration and jubilation that followed the Lord's victory which made the Gods fearless from the terror of their arch enemy Ravana and his kith and kin and army⁵. (2)

[Note—¹The slaying of the demon army is described throughout the narration of the war that spreads across verses in Lanka Kand of the epic Ram Charit Manas. However, since the focus here is on the part of the war that followed Meghanad's death when Ravana directly led the battle himself and died in the end, one can refer

specially to Lanka Kand, from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 78—to Doha no. 101.

²Ravana's death has been described in Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 102—to Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 103.

As has been noted earlier in regard to Kumbhakaran's death, Ravana's soul emerged from his body and entered Lord Ram's body in a symbolic development that showed that his individual 'self' merged with the Supreme Self to become one with the Supreme Being who was in the form of Lord Ram. The fact that this happened shows that inspite of all the external things that Ravana did and said, internally he was pure at heart, was self-realised and enlightened, and his was a holy soul—because otherwise this supreme form of destiny would not have been possible for him. To be able to become one with the Lord is the ultimate objective of all spiritual endeavours, but rarely one succeeds in attaining it.

It also shows the great purity and spiritual welfare that come automatically to a person by remembering Lord Ram—for even a vile demon such as Ravana found deliverance and emancipation for his soul by just remembering Lord Ram day and night, though he did it out of enmity and ill-will for the Lord.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-11 that precede Doha no. 104, and Chaupai line no. 1 that follows this Doha.

Mandodari was a wise wife; she had on several occasions tried to bring Ravana to his senses, but his arrogance and ego prevented him from heeding her advice. When her husband died, she grieved sorely but acknowledged publicly that Ravana himself is to be blamed for the calamity that befell the clan. She even praised Lord Ram to have provided a glorious death to her evil husband by destroying his gross evil body of a demon and liberating his soul so that it could merge with the Lord's own Supreme Soul (refer: Doha no. 104). All the gods and holy spirits that had assembled on the occasion lauded Mandodari for her wisdom.

⁴Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 106.

Like in the case of Sugriv, Lord Ram did not himself enter the city of Lanka but sent his brother Laxman to represent him and anoint Vibhishan on the throne of Lanka as its future king. The Lord thus kept his promise to Vibhishan that was made when he had come to seek refuge with him (refer: Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 8-10 that precede Doha no. 49).

⁵Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 8-11 and Chanda line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 103.

The Gods had been watching the entire proceedings from the sky. When the final victory was Lord Ram's, all of them joined in chorus to pray to the Lord and honour him.]

सीता रघुपति मिलन बहोरी । सुरन्ह कीन्हि अस्तुति कर जोरी ॥ ३ ॥

पुनि पुष्पक चढ़ि कपिन्ह समेता । अवध चले प्रभु कृपा निकेता ॥ ४ ॥

sītā raghupati milana bahōrī. suranha kīnhi astuti kara jōrī. 3.
puni puṣpaka caḍhi kapinha samētā. avadha calē prabhu kṛpā nikētā. 4.

Then he (Kaagbhusund) described the meeting of Sita with Lord Ram¹, and how the Gods sang Lord Ram's glories and praised him with each of them joining the palms of his hands as a gesture of showing reverence and respect to the Lord². (3)

Thereafter, Lord Ram mounted the air-plane called "Pushpak" with other monkeys and proceeded towards his capital of Ayodhya³. (4)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 107—to Doha no. 109.

After the victory in the war and the coronation of Vibhishan as the king of Lanka, Lord Ram sent Hanuman to Lanka to bring Sita back to him. She was escorted with full royal honours by the guards of Vibhishan. When the Lord saw the ceremonial procession, he asked them to bring Sita in an ordinary way and not to show any favour to her. This was in line with the Lord's view that till the exact end of the fourteen year period, they—the Lord himself, his wife Sita and brother Laxman—were to live like a hermit. No special treatment should be shown to any of them.

The meeting of Sita with Lord Ram, however, was clouded by some bitter moments. The Lord wished to ensure that no aspersions are cast at a later date on his or Sita's purity and immaculacy of character or their integrity by an evil world which is ever eager to jump to scandalous conclusions by explicitly proving to the world that Sita was uncorrupt and as chaste and immaculate as she was prior to her abduction by Ravana. He did not want tongues wagging and suspicions aroused for no rhyme or reason. So it is better to nip the dirty gossiping in the bud right then and there.

Hence, Lord Ram asked Sita to prove her integrity by the 'fire test', which means she was to enter a blazing fire and emerge unscathed to prove that she was not touched by any evil hands, and was pure and chaste. Of course she did this willingly, and the Lord and Sita were united.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 110—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 116.

All the Gods, including the senior ones amongst them such as Brahma the creator, Shiva the concluder, Indra the king of Gods, as well as the great sages and seers and mystics, who had been following the war on the ground from their stations in the sky, revealed themselves to offer their obeisance and prayers to Lord Ram.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 118—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 119.

Vibhishan filled the air-plane called 'Pushpak' with gems and jewels and brought it to Lord Ram to pay tribute and to gift it to the Lord. The Lord asked him to go to the sky and overturn its contents—i.e. the gems and the jewels—so that the monkeys and bears could take what they wanted.

Then the Lord assembled them and thanked them all for helping him. He asked the monkeys and bears to go back home as their own kith and kin would be waiting for them. The Lord then expressed his desire to return to his own capital of Ayodhya as the time was running out and the period of fourteen years was coming to an end. He was worried about Bharat, that if he delayed for even one day Bharat would lay down his life as he had vowed in Chitrakoot. Taking the land route back

home would take a long time; so the only way out was to travel by air on the Pushpak plane.

The chief commanders of the monkey-and-bear army, such as Sugriv, Angad, Nal, Neel, Jamvant and Hanuman, as well as Vibhishan, who was the demon king, requested the Lord to accompany him. They all boarded the air-plane, and it lifted into the sky amidst thunderous applause.]

जेहि बिधि राम नगर निज आए । बायस बिसद चरित सब गाए ॥ ५ ॥
कहेसि बहोरि राम अभिषेका । पुर बरनत नृपनीति अनेका ॥ ६ ॥

jēhi bidhi rāma nagara nija ā'ē. bāyasa bisada carita saba gā'ē. 5.
kahēsi bahōri rāma abhiṣēkā. pura baranata nṛpanīti anēkā. 6.

Kaagbhusund then described how Lord Ram reached Ayodhya¹, and sang all other mystical and respectful deeds done by the Lord². (5)

After that he described Lord Ram's coronation as the King of Ayodhya³, and his rules of polity and ideology as he ruled the kingdom with great righteousness, probity and propriety⁴. (6)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (i) Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 119—to Chaupai line no. 12 that precedes Doha no. 121; and (ii) Uttar Kand, Doha no. 4 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it.

As the air-plane moved towards Ayodhya, Lord Ram showed Sita and all his other companions the landmarks on the ground that marked important places during the Lord's journey from Ayodhya to Lanka.

Once he was over the sky of Ayodhya, he asked Hanuman to assume the form of a Brahmin and go to the city to inform Bharat about the Lord's arrival. Meanwhile, as soon as the word spread of the sighting of the plane and the arrival of a messenger of the Lord, celebrations broke out in the city. Every citizen rushed out to the outskirts of the city where the plane landed on the ground.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 5—to Doha no. 11.

The Lord met his brothers Bharat and Shatrughan, as well as his teacher and chief priest of the kingdom, sage Vasistha. Then he met each single citizen of the city individually, embraced each one of them and asked for his welfare—which was a wondrous and a miraculous feat because hundreds and thousands of them had assembled to greet the Lord. Then he entered the city and met his mothers and other members of the household. He paid special attention to Kaikeyi and paid his respects to her to assuage her feelings and tell her that he harbours no ill-will against her at all.

The Lord introduced all his companions who had accompanied him from Lanka to his brothers and other family members, to sage Vasistha as well as to all his ministers, emphasising his gratitude for them and telling them all that it was due to them that he had defeated his enemy and come back home alive. This noble gesture of thanks-giving and expression of gratitude for monkeys, bears and demons whom the Lord called his 'dear friends' was appreciated by one and all.

The city was decorated and lighted up. The gloom and despair of the past fourteen years was replaced with joy, merriment, exhilaration, jubilation and celebration in great abundance.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 12—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 20.

Lord Ram was crowned as the Sovereign of the vast empire of Ayodhya. All the great sages and seers of the time had assembled there to bless the Lord, as did the Gods including the creator Brahma, the concluder Shiva, and the Vedas, the scriptures, in a personified form, to pay their obeisance and reverence to the Lord.

⁴Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 20—to Doha no. 31.

Lord Ram ruled the realm in an exemplarily righteous, proper and rightful manner in accordance to the principles of Dharma (the laws and regulations that govern right action, right deed, right behaviour, right thought and right life). There was peace, happiness and prosperity everywhere; no one suffered from diseases or want of any thing. All were given justice, treated alike, and all loved their Lord and led a righteous life like him.]

कथा समस्त भुसुंड बखानी । जो मैं तुम्ह सन कही भवानी ॥ ७ ॥

सुनि सब राम कथा खगनाहा । कहत बचन मन परम उछाहा ॥ ८ ॥

kathā samasta bhusuṇḍa bakhānī. jō maim tumha sana kahī bhavānī. 7.
suni saba rāma kathā khaganāhā. kahata bacana mana parama uchāhā. 8.

This is how Kaagbhusund narrated the whole sacred life-story of Lord Ram to Garud, the king of birds.

Then Lord Shiva told his consort Parvati, who was also known by the name of Bhavani, ‘Oh Bhavani! It was the same story that I have told you¹.’ (7)

When the king of birds Garud heard the entire story of Lord Ram, he was filled with exhilaration and felt very ecstatic. He said to the crow-saint Kaagbhusund as follows—(8)

[Note—¹The divine and sacred story of Lord Ram was first conceived in the heart of Lord Shiva, and when his consort Parvati approached him to narrate this story to her then Lord Shiva described it to her from the beginning to the end.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 11-12 that precede Doha no. 35, and later on at various other places such as (ii) Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 106—to Doha no. 111, and (iii) Baal Kand, Doha no. 119—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 121 where this fact is explicitly mentioned.]

सो०. गयउ मोर संदेह सुनेउँ सकल रघुपति चरित ।

भयउ राम पद नेह तव प्रसाद बायस तिलक ॥ ६८ (क) ॥

sōraṭhā.

gaya'u mōra sandēha sunē'um̐ sakala raghupati carita.
bhaya'u rāma pada nēha tava prasāda bāyasa tilaka. 68 (a).

[Garud said—] ‘All my doubts and delusions have now been removed after hearing the entire sacred and divine story of Lord Raghupati (literally, the “Lord of the Raghu’s line of Kings”, here referring to Lord Ram).

Oh the most exalted and blessed Crow (bāyasa tilaka)! By your grace and blessings I have developed devotion and faith in the holy feet of Lord Ram. (Sortha no. 68-a)

मोहि भयउ अति मोह प्रभु बंधन रन महुँ निरखि ।
चिदानंद संदोह राम बिकल कारन कवन ॥ ६८ (ख) ॥

mōhi bhaya'u ati mōha prabhu bandhana rana mahum̐ nirakhi.
cidānanda sandōha rāma bikala kārana kavana. 68 (b).

When I had seen Lord Ram getting trapped by the snare of serpents in the battle-field of Lanka, I was utterly confused and overcome with mighty doubts about the reality of the Lord¹.

I wondered how can the Lord who is believed to be eternally free from all delusions, who is beyond the entanglements so characteristic of mundane existence in this gross perishable world, who is eternally blissful and knowledge personified, be ever trapped by gross things of the world (such as getting ensnared by a long rope consisting of snakes, and after getting thus trapped feel anguished and worried so much so that he could not free himself and had to rely upon my help to set him free). I wondered—what is the cause of it; how come this happened; why did the Lord get trapped, and why couldn’t he free himself and called out to me to help him? (Sortha 68-b)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, from Chaupai line nos. 10-13 that precede Doha no. 73, and Chaupai line nos. 1-2 and 10 that follow it together with Doha no. 74 that completes the picture.

During the thick of battle at Lanka, Meghanad, the son of Ravana, became extremely angry and put to use all the magical tricks-of-battle he knew about. He went into the sky and shot a mysterious weapon at Lord Ram. This weapon immediately transformed into long serpents, and they wrapped themselves around the body of the Lord. Now it must be remembered, as has been clarified earlier also, that Lord Ram did not want to divulge his true identity as the almighty Supreme Being because that would have alerted the demons and they would have either surrendered before the Lord or fled somewhere to hide. In this eventuality, the very purpose of the Lord coming down all the way from heaven to earth and then traversing on foot such a long distance and undertaking such an arduous journey from Ayodhya to Lanka would have been made null and void. Hence, though the Lord could have easily broken free from this snare of snakes, he desisted from doing so.

Meanwhile, the celestial sage Narad sent Garud to free the Lord by eating the snakes. It is believed that since that time, the snakes are terrified of Garud. However,

Garud was confused and overcome by doubt because he knew the might of his Lord Vishnu—that he was invincible, and no power in creation could ever overcome him. So if Lord Ram was indeed Lord Vishnu as he had heard and was made to believe, Garud wondered how come ordinary snakes tied him down, and how come he could not free himself?

This incidence weighed heavily on the mind of Garud and by-and-by led him to the hermitage of sage Kaagbhusund where everything was explained to him. So his confusions and doubts about the divine reality of Lord Ram were removed.

Garud himself acknowledges why he got confused in the next verses herein below.]

चौ०. देखि चरित अति नर अनुसारी । भयउ हृदयँ मम संसय भारी ॥ १ ॥

सोइ भ्रम अब हित करि मैं माना । कीन्ह अनुग्रह कृपानिधाना ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

dēkhi carita ati nara anusārī. bhaya'u hrdayam̐ mama sansaya bhārī. 1.
sō'i bhrama aba hita kari maiṁ mānā. kīnha anugraha kṛpānidhānā. 2.

Garud told Kaagbhusund, 'When I observed Lord Ram behaving like an ordinary human being, I was extremely bewildered; a lot of doubt overwhelmed my heart (and mind) regarding the reality and the truth of who Lord Ram actually was¹. (1)

Now I realise that error of judgement was for my own good, and I feel that the all-merciful Lord had bestowed a favour on me by creating that delusion². (2)

[Note—¹Refer to the note appended to Doha no. 68-b herein above for details. Garud was confused because all the while he thought that his Lord Vishnu, who was the almighty and omnipotent Lord of the world, had revealed himself in the physical form of Lord Ram. So he just could not reconcile this fact with the way Lord Ram was fighting the war on the ground, getting wounded and trapped by a magical snare created by his opponent. How can this happen, wondered Garud; why did the Lord not break through this snare on his own but needed Garud's help to do so?

It is to be noted here that bewilderment, perplexity and doubts are such negative things that as soon as they manage to get a foothold in one's mind and heart, all wisdom and discriminatory powers to make correct judgement and assess things with the right and proper perspective are eclipsed. In the present context this principle applies especially to Garud who had doubts about Lord Ram's divinity, whether he was an ordinary human being or the Supreme Lord himself in that form. Refer to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precedes Doha no. 119 where this principle is endorsed by Lord Shiva himself.

²Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 62 where Lord Shiva has said the same thing—that he understood that Garud had shown some sense of pride on some earlier occasion and the merciful Lord wished to clean Garud of this negative trait, and that is why the Lord caused him to be overcome with delusions so that he would be forced to hear the divine story of the Lord being narrated by some humble bird of his own race so his pride of being exalted and senior would disappear. This is the primary reason why Lord Shiva had sent

Garud to the hermitage of the saintly crow Kaagbhusund. The other reason of course was that it would be easier for Garud, who was a 'bird' by birth, though of a noble stature as he was the mount of Lord Vishnu, to understand the language of another bird, in this case the 'crow' Kaagbhusund. Refer: Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 62.

Garud now realised that the Lord wanted him to spend some quality time in the holy community of saints where the Lord's divine stories and glories are narrated and explained in detail with a lot of devotion. This would also enable Garud to enjoy the spiritual bliss that comes in the holy and purified environment of such places, and to dip himself in the sacred water of spiritual blessedness and beatitude that is the natural reward of having communion with saints and pious souls.

Garud explains this himself in the following verses.]

जो अति आतप व्याकुल होई । तरु छाया सुख जानइ सोई ॥ ३ ॥

जौं नहिं होत मोह अति मोही । मिलतेउँ तात कवन बिधि तोही ॥ ४ ॥

jō ati ātapa byākula hō'ī. taru chāyā sukha jāna'i sō'ī. 3.

jauṁ nahim hōta mōha ati mōhī. milatē'um' tātā kavana bidhi tōhī. 4.

[Giving an example, he says:] 'When anyone is suffering by the oppressive heat of the sun, it is only then that he realises the comfort and solace that is found under the shade of a leafy tree. (3)

My dear (Kaagbhusund), if I had not been deluded and tormented by mental perplexities, how could and why would have I got an opportunity to come and meet you¹? (4)

[Note—¹To wit, if I was at peace with my self, if I had not suffered mental torments, why would I have gone to sage Narad to seek an answer to the question that had vexed me. The wise celestial sage then directed me to the creator Brahma, who then sent me to Lord Shiva, and finally I came to you upon his advice. On this pretext I had had the opportunity to meet Narad, Brahma, Shiva, and now you, the Exalted One.

I feel I am so lucky and blessed. I now feel that my merciful Lord Vishnu wished to use the spare time that I had while he was away from heaven, and was present on earth in the form of Lord Ram to accomplish the task of the Gods, to some good use that would be for my own spiritual welfare, instead of wasting it away idling in the heaven waiting for the Lord's return. So he managed the things in such a way that I got confused and finally came to you to spend my time in blissful spiritual ecstasy in your company.]

सुनतेउँ किमि हरि कथा सुहाई । अति बिचित्र बहु बिधि तुम्ह गाई ॥ ५ ॥

निगमागम पुरान मत एहा । कहहिं सिद्ध मुनि नहिं संदेहा ॥ ६ ॥

sunatē'um' kimi hari kathā suhā'ī. ati bicitra bahu bidhi tumha gā'ī. 5.

nigamāgama purāna mata ēhā. kahahim sid'dha muni nahim sandēhā. 6.

If it not had been for my delusions and confusions, how and why would I have (come to you and) heard the divine story of Lord Ram that is so wondrous and pleasant to hear, and which you have described in such finery from different angles, narrating its various aspects and fascinating details. (5)

Indeed and without gainsay, the Vedas and the Purans as well as the learned sages and mystics assert in an unequivocal term that --- (6)

संत बिसुद्ध मिलहिं परि तेही । चितवहिं राम कृपा करि जेही ॥ ७ ॥
राम कृपाँ तव दरसन भयऊ । तव प्रसाद सब संसय गयऊ ॥ ८ ॥

santa bisud'dha milahim pari tēhī. citavahim rāma kṛpā kari jēhī. 7.
rāma kṛpām̐ tava darasana bhaya'ū. tava prasāda saba sansaya gaya'ū. 8.

--- True and self-realised saints and pious people are accessible only to those on whom Lord Ram is gracious and pleased, who are looked upon with favour by the Lord. (7)

Truly, it is by the grace of Lord Ram that I had been fortunate enough to have your blessed sight, to have met you, and it is by your grace that all my doubts and bewilderments have now disappeared¹. (8)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 61 and Chaupai line no. 1 that follows it where Lord Shiva has asserted that the Lord's divine stories cannot be heard except in the company of saints, that without hearing this glorious story delusions and bewilderments cannot go away, and without this happening one cannot develop steady affection and true devotion for the holy feet of Lord Ram. No other method such as doing Yoga (meditation), Yagya (religious sacrifices), Tapa (austerities and penances), Gyan (acquisition of truthful knowledge) and Vairagya (renunciation, detachment and dispassion) would help the creature in this respect.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, (i) Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 7 where Vibhishan has said the same thing when he met Hanuman; and (ii) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 45 where Lord Ram has himself asserted this principle.]

दो०. सुनि बिहंगपति बानी सहित बिनय अनुराग ।

पुलक गात लोचन सजल मन हरषेउ अति काग ॥ ६९ (क) ॥

dōhā.

sunī bihaṅgapati bānī sahita binaya anurāga.

pulaka gāta lōcana sajala mana haraṣē'u ati kāga. 69 (a).

On hearing the words of the King of Birds, i.e. Garud, that were spoken with great reverence, humility and affection, the 'crow' (Kaagbhusund) became thrilled in his body and tears welled-up in his eyes even as he felt extremely exhilarated in his Mana (mind and heart) and rejoiced exceedingly. (Doha no. 69-a)

श्रोता सुमति सुसील सुचि कथा रसिक हरि दास ।
पाइ उमा अति गोप्यमपि सज्जन करहिं प्रकास ॥ ६९ (ख) ॥

śrōtā sumati susīla suci kathā rasika hari dāsa.
pā'i umā ati gōpyamapi sajjana karahim prakāsa. 69 (b).

[Lord Shiva told his consort—] ‘Oh Uma! When a saintly speaker (a teacher or a learned preacher—“sajjana”) finds a listener who, besides being intelligent, wise, courteous, virtuous and possessing excellent characters, is also a devotee of Lord Hari, has deep interest in and is fond of hearing the divine story of the Lord, then the speaker feels enthused and is encouraged to willingly divulge even the profoundest of secrets pertaining to the Lord to the listener, without having any reservations¹. (Doha no. 69-b)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 74 where we read that Kaagbhusund has also endorsed this view of Garud, saying that he has narrated the full story of Lord Ram without concealing anything. He did so because he found that Garud was blessed by Lord Ram, because he had a deep interest in learning about the glories of the Lord, because he had devotion and affection for the Lord. All these traits in Garud had pleased Kaagbhusund so much that the latter chose to reveal the story with all its intricacies to the former.

‘Without any reservations’ implies that the preacher or the teacher has no apprehension in his mind about the intention of the listener or the latter’s ability to fully and clearly understand what is being said, and grasp the details in the correct way and in the correct perspective. The teacher or the preacher wants to be sure that the listener would not mock him, deride or ridicule him later on for certain things that may not appear appealing to the listener or may not conform to his or her way of thinking, religious belief or view of life and the world. The teacher or the preacher also wishes to make it sure that the concepts and principles, whether apparent or implied, whether esoteric or common-place, as taught and preached by him are not misinterpreted or misrepresented or twisted by the hearer so as to kill the very spirit and intent of the discourse.]

चौ०. बोलेउ काकभसुंड बहोरी । नभग नाथ पर प्रीति न थोरी ॥ १ ॥

सब बिधि नाथ पूज्य तुम्ह मेरे । कृपापात्र रघुनायक केरे ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

bōlē'u kākabhasuṇḍa bahōrī. nabhaga nātha para prīti na thōrī. 1.
saba bidhi nātha pūjya tumha mērē. kṛpāpātra raghunāyaka kērē. 2.

Kaagbhusund—who had no small affection for the ‘Lord of all the air-borne creatures’ (i.e. Garud, the King of Birds: “nabhaga nātha”)—said once again (as follows) : --- (1)

‘Oh my Lord! You are honourable and praiseworthy for me by all counts. Indeed you are the blessed one with whom Lord Raghunaayak (Sri Ram) is pleased; you are the blessed one to have won the grace of Lord Ram. [And this is also one of the reasons why I have great respect for you.] (2)

तुम्हहि न संसय मोह न माया । मो पर नाथ कीन्हि तुम्ह दाया ॥ ३ ॥
पठइ मोह मिस खगपति तोही । रघुपति दीन्हि बड़ाई मोही ॥ ४ ॥

tumhahi na sansaya mōha na māyā. mō para nātha kīnhi tumha dāyā. 3.
paṭha'i mōha misa khagapati tōhī. raghupati dīnhi barā'ī mōhī. 4.

You do not have any trace of ‘Sansaya’ or ‘Maya’ in you. {‘Sansaya’ means doubts and confusions that arise due to delusions and ignorance. ‘Maya’ means delusions themselves that would lead to so many problems that are outlined in the forthcoming verses. Garud had doubts about the divinity of Lord Ram; who actually he was, whether he was an ordinary human being or was he the Supreme Lord in a human form? The sight on the battle-field had deluded and confused him. }

In fact oh Lord, you have been very gracious towards me (that you chose to come to my hermitage all the way from your abode in the heaven, and then shown so much respect to me inspite of the fact that you are my ‘King’ and I, being a ‘bird’ by birth, am a humble subject of your kingdom)¹. (3)

In fact, Lord Ram has given me great honour by sending you to me on the pretext or excuse that you have some kind of ‘Moha’ in you². {‘Moha’ means having a passion about certain thing and the dilemma and restlessness that arises as a consequence of it. Once he was torn between this and that, he developed a passion to find out the truth, and was overcome with anxiety and restlessness in this search. He lost his peace of mind and developed a heart-burn.} (4)

[Note—¹Kaagbhusund told Garud: ‘You have taken the trouble to come to my humble place to give me honour. You have heard the story of Lord Ram from me, thereby implying that I am the greatest and the most competent narrator of this divine story of the Lord anywhere in the world. You are the king of birds, and this is a rare honour that the king himself visits the place of one of his subjects to praise him. For this kind and gracious act of yours, I am sincerely obliged and grateful to you.

²I know that you are above the influences of Moha—because you are so close to Lord Vishnu. Anyone who is so close to the Lord, anyone who is so lucky that Lord Vishnu decides to keep him as one of his close aides, just cannot be touched by the shadow of Maya or its accompanying Moha.

Even Lord Ram, who was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu himself, has asserted that if a living being has ‘Bhakti’, or devotion and submission for the Lord, in his heart, the corrupting negative influences of Maya do not affect him—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 85 along with its preceding Chuapai line nos. 3-8.

It ought to be noted here that both the teacher and the disciple, or both the speaker and his listener, viz. Kaagbhusund and Garud respectively, are showing mutual respect and expressing their courtesy for each other. The lesson to be learnt

here is that this is the proper way a seeker should approach his teacher to learn something, and this is also the way the teacher should treat his disciple. They should both be humble, unpretentious and courteous towards each other. This helps them both—the teacher opens his treasury of knowledge for the benefit of his student, and the latter feels free to ask any questions he or she has from the teacher, both having no reservations with the other.]

तुम्ह निज मोह कही खग साई । सो नहिं कछु आचरज गोसाई ॥ ५ ॥
 नारद भव बिरंचि सनकादी । जे मुनिनायक आतमबादी ॥ ६ ॥
 मोह न अंध कीन्ह केहि केही । को जग काम नचाव न जेही ॥ ७ ॥
 तृस्नाँ केहि न कीन्ह बौराहा । केहि कर हृदय क्रोध नहिं दाहा ॥ ८ ॥

tumha nija mōha kahī khagasā'īm. sō nahiṁ kachu ācaraja gōsā'īm. 5.
 nārada bhava biran̄ci sanakādī. jē munināyaka ātamabādī. 6.
 mōha na andha kīnha kēhi kēhī. kō jaga kāma nacāva na jēhī. 7.
 tṛṣṇāṁ kēhi na kīnha baurāhā. kēhi kara hṛdaya krōdha nahiṁ dāhā. 8.

Oh the King of Birds (khagasā'īm)! You said that you were overcome by 'Moha', but oh Lord (gōsā'īm) there is no surprise in it¹. [Why is it so? This question is answered from Chaupai line no. 6 onwards herein below.] (5)

But even if one accepts that you did have some sort of 'Moha' in you then there is no surprise in it as even the most exalted of souls were influenced by it.

For instance, the celestial sage Narad, Lord Shiva who is known by the name of Bhava, the creator Brahma who is also known as Viranchi, the learned celestial sages Sankadi etc. who are regarded as foremost amongst wise, self-realised and enlightened ones who are great exponents of the Truth and knowledgeable about the truth of the Self (the cosmic Consciousness; the universal Spirit; the Atma)--- (6)²

--- Even they were not spared by it (i.e. by Moha). Say, who amongst them were not blinded by 'Moha#' at some point of time? {Moha = worldly attachment, attraction, infatuation, longing.}

Is there anyone in this world who has not become a puppet in the hands of 'Kaam@', who has not danced to its tunes? {Kaam = passions, lust, yearning and desire for gratification, both worldly and sensual.} (7)

Similarly, who is not deluded and maddened by 'Trishna\$'? {Trishna = an unquenchable thirst, an excessive greed and longing for enjoyment of the pleasures and comforts of the material world and its sense objects.}

Once again, whose heart has not been scorched by the raging fire of 'Krodha*'? {Krodha = anger, wrathfulness, vengeance, indignation, fury etc.} (8)

[Note—¹There seems to be a contradiction between this Chaupai and the earlier Chaupai line no. 3 wherein Kaagbhusund had told Garud that the latter had no 'Sansaya, Maya or Moha' inside him. Well, a careful analysis shows that in the present Chaupai Kaagbhusund says that it was Garud who had said that he had 'Moha' in him, and *not* Kaagbhusund. The latter reminded Garud that he had himself

acknowledged earlier that this Moha was a blessing-in-disguise for him and was for his own good as it helped him to come and hear the divine story of Lord Ram being narrated in a holy environment that bestowed peace and bliss to him—refer: Chaupai line nos. 2-8 that precede Doha no. 69 herein above.

²Now, from this Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 70 right upto Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 72, sage Kaagbhusund lists the ‘associates’ of Maya. He calls them Maya’s ‘family’—refer: Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 71. The different entities listed in these verses are the negative traits present in a person that indicate that he is under the spell of Maya, that he is deluded and restless, that he has lost his peace of mind and heart, that his reasoning and stability of mind are gone for a toss. He yearns for all those things that give him constant worries and sadness, and never does he ever think of those things that would give him eternal peace and bliss.

All the listed negative spiritual traits are closely associated and linked with Maya; they are therefore Maya’s family. They are visible indicators of the way maya negatively affects an individual.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede Doha no. 59 where sage Narad has told Garud that Maya is so powerful that it robs wisdom and analytical skills of even the greatest of wise men.

In other words, the power of ‘Maya’, the power of delusions, is so strong and overriding that no one can stand its onslaught. No one, no matter how learned and wise he may be such as the acclaimed sages named here, i.e. Narad and Sankaadi, or how exalted and divine he may be as represented by the two gods cited here, i.e. Lord Shiva and Lord Brahma who are the 1st and the 3rd gods of the Trinity—no one is immune to the influence of Maya.

The main idea here is that Maya and its different components are very powerful negative forces of creation that rarely exempt anyone from their influence. Does that mean that no one is free from the delusions created by ‘Maya’ and its representative known as ‘Moha’? Well, the answer is found at two places in the context of this conversation between sage Kaagbhusund and Garud.

The first is in Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 47 where it is explicitly said that all vices such as ‘Lobha’ (greed), ‘Moha’ (infatuations), ‘Matsarya’ (envy and jealousy), ‘Mada’ (arrogance), ‘Mamta’ (affection and attachment), ‘Raag and Dwesh’ (attraction and hatred or repulsion)—all such negative traits live in the heart of an individual only as long as the sun of Lord Ram’s grace and devotion does not shine to illuminate the heart of a person and remove the darkness of ignorance from there.”

And the other is found in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 43 where sage Narad has conceded that ‘Maya’ took over his heart when Lord Ram motivated it to do so. In other words, Maya acts only when Lord Ram wants it to act; Maya is in control of the Lord and can’t act independently. But there is one very important exemption here—and it is the ‘Viraat Purush’. He is no one else but a personified form of the Supreme Being known as Brahm in the Upanishads. His other name is Lord Vishnu who is the sustainer and protector of creation. He is the omnipresent, the omnipotent and the omniscient Lord of creation. It is he who had incarnated as Lord Ram in the present case. Whenever the creatures of this creation suffered, whenever the evil forces of creation became ascendant and began to crush the good and decimate noble values, the Supreme Lord of creation intervened and restored the balance.

To do this of course he has to employ various tricks in order to trap and defeat the negative forces because these forces do not obey any laws or conform to any standard patterns of behaviour. The disease has to be cured, and so the cosmic Doctor (Vishnu, the Supreme Lord) adapts himself according to the patient and his disease. But to the ordinary world it appears that often times even Vishnu becomes a victim of Maya, but as reasoned above, it is merely a ploy to trap the evil and demonic forces, something which cannot be done by taking the straight path.

Let us take an example from the story of Ramayan to understand this point. Lord Vishnu had incarnated in a human form as Lord Ram, the prince of Ayodhya. Vishnu had to take a human form to eliminate the cruel, blood-thirsty and ferocious demons led by their king Ravana. For this purpose Ram had to create a situation that would give him an excuse and a chance to go and kill these demons. He did not wish to trouble others, so decided that his wife Sita would have to suffer a bit so that the larger good of the world can be done. Therefore, things were so manipulated that Sita was kidnapped by Ravana. This obviously gave Lord Ram an excuse to wage a war to liberate her from her captors. Every chance was given to Ravana to free Sita, but once it was certain that he would not do so, a fierce battle followed, and cruel demons were eliminated one by one with the war to free Sita as being merely an excuse.

Now, we read in the story that when at the time Sita was abducted, Lord Ram wailed and grieved and lamented for his dear wife, and even contemplated dying like an ordinary heart-broken lover. It appeared from all his demeanours that he was a lustful man overcome with grief due to separation from his loving wife. But this was only to disguise the reality of his true identity as an incarnation of Vishnu—because if the demons got a hint that their death was at Ram's hands, they would have either returned Sita or would have scampared to hide somewhere. If that happened, the entire exercise would have failed.

So, whatever way Lord Ram behaved was just for show. Actually, 'Maya' had not affected him.

Lord Ram has also listed these negative traits to sage Narad in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 43.

#Moha—Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 47.

The word 'Moha' refers to the misconceived and ill-advised attachment and attraction that a creature develops for things in this world which are artificial and transient in nature because of the simple fact that this world itself is temporary and perishable.

'Moha' literally traps a person in ignorance-induced delusions leading to worldly attractions, infatuations, attachments and passions. This trap ensnares him in a tight web, and prevents his liberation and deliverance. This happens only till the time he is veiled by ignorance and in his stupidity thinks to be wise, and therefore never attempts to find out the truth; he remains contented being ignorant in his fallacious belief that ignorance is bliss! There is no bigger stupidity than this. So a wise person endeavours to understand the real and truthful nature of the world behind the façade which is nevertheless false and misleading. He realises and sees the supreme Brahman everywhere, in all the creatures. Consequentially, all become equal in his eyes. He becomes humble and pious; he loses his haughtiness and arrogance; he becomes merciful, gracious and kind towards all.

Secondly, a wise person realises the falsehood of this perishable world, the futility of pursuing it blindly. He understands that he is merely a player in the hands

of the cosmic Lord. He should concentrate his energy of serving the Lord's creation selflessly without expecting any return. So, when there is no involvement in the world and the deeds are done without any hopes, all the reasons for agitations and frustrations vanish. There is no fear of failure and there is no competitor to beat. This allays all sorrows, sufferings, grief and miseries that continuously torment a creature who has not overcome 'Moha'.

The concept of 'Moha' has been explained in *Ishavasya Upanishad*, verse no. 7 of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition in these words—"In that realised and erudite state of enlightenment, when an exalted person becomes acquainted with and convinced of the truth about that supreme, transcendental Lord (that he pervades the entire creation uniformly and universally), all the creatures then become an image of that Supreme Being for him. In that exalted and enlightened state of mind when that person witnesses the Lord everywhere in a non-dual form (i.e. when he sees no distinction between the supreme, almighty, macrocosmic Lord and the humble, meek and microcosmic individual because both are an image of one another), what delusions and doubts, what confusions and consternations remain for him? [That is, no attachments or infatuations would affect him, and therefore there will be no cause for sorrows, sufferings and grief on separation from his dear ones, or jealousy and hatred due to worldly mundane causes. He goes beyond such lowly, denigrating and pervert emotions. Consequentially, he attains beatitude and felicity; equanimity and magnanimity become his hallmark.]"

The *Varaaha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 5, verse no. 66 describes Moha as a 'Granthi' or hard nut to crack or a knot that is difficult to untie as follows—"The aspirant's next hurdle to be overcome in the spiritual path is 'Moha Granthi': the hard nut-like knot that represents numerous attachments to and infatuation with the sense objects of the material world, longing for them and having a strong desire to acquire them and enjoy them—which together act like formidable spiritual blocks or knots or hurdles that need be dismantled or overcome before a spiritual aspirant can actually claim true freedom from the fetters of this world.

This Moha Granthi is such a hard nut to crack that it is made possible to do so only by the good influences of auspicious deeds and thoughts brought forward from one's past, as well as by the grace of an enlightened Guru (moral preceptor, guide and teacher) (66)."

The negative virtues of having 'Moha' is usually applied in relation to the material sense objects of the world, but it also relates to one's attachment with the body, with other people around him, as well as to acquire name, fame and wealth. Moha also means delusions and its attending horrible spiritual consequences. Moha acts like a veil that obscures the truth from being viewed by the man. It leads him to commit errors and sins inadvertently because he is not even aware that he is acting wrongly. His mind is biased, deluded and corrupted. 'Moha' is therefore like a formidable Granthi or knot because it is hard to crack like a nut.

A similar idea is expressed in Tulsidas' wonderful Book of Prayers known as *Vinai Patrika*, in its verse no. 117, stanza no. 2, which says—"I know that it is futile to pursue the material objects of the world and to remain engrossed in gratifying the urges of the sense organs of the body. I know that this is like voluntarily falling in the dark pit of ignorance and delusions. But inspite of this awareness I keep on running behind the sense objects like a dog, a goat and a donkey."

A dog nibbles at a piece of dead bone and relishes the taste of blood that comes out of its own mouth by constant biting and tearing at the tissue of the bone,

but it thinks in its ignorance that the blood is oozing from the bone itself and not from his own mouth.

Similarly, a goat who is about to be butchered goes on feeding and nibbling at leaves etc., unaware of the fact that it is about to be killed.

The donkey grazes constantly on green grass in a large meadow but still goes on getting thin because when it sees the large stretch of land full of green grass lying ahead it thinks that it has not eaten enough and its stomach is still empty. So in spite of over-feeding its self, the donkey remains hungry and famished.

@Kaam—The word ‘Kaam’ means sensual attractions of worldly charms and the overwhelming urge for sense gratification, collectively called ‘Kaam’. It literally refers to lust, yearnings, lasciviousness and passions; desire for sensual gratification and enjoyments of the material world and its juicy attractions.

It also refers to a creature’s various aspirations and desires which are said to be of three principal types. These three Kaams are said to be three types of desires and aspirations that a creature has. These three Kaams relate to the fulfillment of spiritual desires, worldly desires for obtaining the numerous material objects that give pleasure and comfort, and the desire to gratification of the sense organs.

\$Trishna—Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 71 which appears below says that there are three types of Trishnas—viz. that which pertains to one’s son or off-spring, that which pertains to one’s personal financial well-being, and that which pertains to the external world.

The concept of ‘Trishna’ has been described in the Atharva Veda’s *Annapurna Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse no. 35, and in Canto 5, verse no. 14 as follows—

“Canto 1, verse no. 35 = A person who is peaceful, tranquil, serene and calm in his inner-self would treat the outside world in a similar manner.

This is like looking at the world through a glass window. The sights seen would assume the colour of the glass. If the glass is red tinted for instance, the world outside would also be red-hued. This fact has been beautifully brought out in Dhyana Bindu Upanishad, Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 93/1-93/15, and in Naradparivrajak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 6, verse no. 3.

Now therefore, if the inner-self is pure and untainted, if it is calm and peaceful, the Atma—which incidentally is the ‘observer’ living inside the dwelling known as the body of the creature—would see or observe the outside world as being calm and peaceful. On the contrary, if the inner-self is restless and agitated, the outer world too appears to be restless and agitated in equal proportion for the creature. In other words, a man sees the world like he himself is. Hence the importance is on attaining inner peace and quietude instead of seeking it outside because the ‘outside’ is a world that is constantly on the boil and ever simmering like the surface of the hot sand in a desert when mirage makes its appearance.

Similarly, a man whose inner-self is burning with ‘Trishna’ (greed, rapacity, yearnings and wants) would find the world too tormenting and agitating for his soul. He would find only miseries and sorrows in the world (because his greed and yearning never ends, the more he gets the more he wants, and like a man running behind the illusive water seen in a mirage in the hot desert such a man too does not find peace anywhere in the world, but is rather scorched by the various sorrows and miseries that accompany shortages, unfulfilled desires, lack of opportunities and so

many other things or situations that lead to dismay and frustration that seem to engulf him from all sides, drowning him and suffocating him in their wake).

An internally contented man would be happy with whatever he has in this world and would thank the Lord for it, and an internally unsatisfied man may become the Emperor of the whole earth but would still want more of it, and remain dissatisfied and greedy throughout his life. Internally he is being ‘burnt’ by numerous aspirations, yearnings, desires and wants, and externally this world ‘burns’ him in failed ambitions leading to a chain of frustrations, dismay, distrust, strife, jealousy, ill-will, enmity, animosity and their accompanying sorrows, miseries and pains. (35).

“Canto 5, verse no. 14 = Oh Anagh (one who is sinless; here referring to Nidagh)! Become silent and composed. Abandon all mental and intellectual restlessness and perplexities.

Discard all inclinations to think of anything; be neutral and immune to all thoughts (because any kind of thought would entangle you in a web of doubts and confusions as there are numerous doctrines and many aspects of the same Truth which would create more confusions in your mind than removing them, and two, thoughts would keep you on your toes and would not allow you to rest even for a while).

Leave aside all the Vrittis (natural inclinations and temperaments) that are the integral part of the Chitta (mind and sub-conscious). [Refer Canto 1, verse no. 42.]

Be of an exemplary calmness of mind and composed demeanours; cultivate a high degree of mental steadiness. This will pave the way for your Nirvana—or the final spiritual liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation. [Refer Canto 5, verse no. 86.] (114).”

*Krodha—Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 277 where Laxman, the younger brother of Lord Ram, has told sage Parashuram, who was very angry because Lord Shiva’s bow had been broken as a precondition of Sita’s marriage, that ‘anger and fury’ is at the root of all sorts of sins and wrong-doings that torment a man and cause him endless problems.]

दो०. ग्यानी तापस सूर कबि कोबिद गुन आगार ।

केहि कै लोभ बिडंबना कीन्हि न एहिं संसार ॥ ७० (क) ॥

dōhā.

gyānī tāpasa sūra kabi kōbida guna āgāra.

kēhi kai lōbha biḍambanā kīnhi na ēhiṁ sansāra. 70 (a).

Whether a person is Gyani (a knowledgeable, well learned, enlightened and wise person), a Taapas (an ascetic or hermit who does severe Tapa, or performs stern penances and observes strict austerities), a Sura (a brave, courageous person who is of a resolute and steady mind; a hero), a Kabi (a learned person; an expert in any field, especially that pertains to the letters or scriptures), a Kobid (a seer and an expert), or someone who is deemed to be a treasury of all the good and auspicious virtues in this world (Guna Aagaar)—

--Say, who amongst them has been spared from the embarrassment and dilemma that ‘Lobha’ (greed, rapacity) creates in this world; who has not been betrayed by Lobha¹. (Doha no. 70 -a)

[Note—¹Lobha: Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 47.

In Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 21 where Sugriv, the king of the monkey race, tells Lord Ram that if a person is not snared by Lobha, then surely he is like the Lord himself. In other words, only the very holy and pious souls escape the trap of Lobha.

‘Lobha’ is such a vice that draws in its tentacles even the wisest of men. They all fall prey to its temptations. Greed and rapacity creates such a situation for them they sooner or later they are all embarrassed, and subject to ridicule and infamy. But inspite of knowing this fact, they still yearn for this or that material thing of the world.

For instance, a monk has renounced the world and taken the vows of austerity. Then he falls prey to temptations and begins to collect things of comfort around him. He wears ochre clothes and turns the beads of the prayer rosary, but his mind is preoccupied by the things of the world. He has to build a monastery, or a temple or such like things. Then he worries about its upkeep and organisation. Then he wants a bank account and money to fill this account. He now needs attendants, office and other paraphernalia needed to run the affairs of the web he has himself created around him. The vicious cycle continues. His greed for more and still more never ends. He wants his organisation to expand, to go to foreign lands and establish branches there.

A hermit builds a hermitage, then he collects disciples, then he wants more of them, then he wants his name and fame to spread, and so on. The hermit and the monk fall in the trap of ‘Lobha’ as well as ‘Trishna’.

Remember: Lobha, Trishna, Krodha, Moha, Maya, Kaam etc. go hand in hand; all of them are intertwined, and they affect and determine the character, well-being, attitude and outlook of an individual in a composite manner. One leads to another. Some are synonymous with each other, some have different meanings individually but are closely inter-linked with each other, some pave the way for other related vices, some are easy to overcome while others are stubborn to the hilt, and the vicious chain continues which is detrimental for the happiness and welfare of the individual person who allows even one such evil guest to enter his house.]

श्री मद बक्र न कीन्ह केहि प्रभुता बधिर न काहि ।

मृगलोचनि के नैन सर को अस लाग न जाहि ॥ ७० (ख) ॥

śrī mada bakra na kīnha kēhi prabhutā badhira na kāhi.
mṛgalōcani kē naina sara kō asa lāga na jāhi. 70 (b).

Who has not become haughty, arrogant, egoist, reckless and ill-mannered due to the false sense of pride of pelf, pride of self-importance and self-worth that comes with acquisition of ‘Sri’ (worldly material wealth and enhanced prosperity)?

Likewise, who has not been defeaned by ‘Prabhuta’ or acquisition of power and authority¹?

Again, is there anyone who has not been smitten (hit and conquered) by the lustful glances that resemble sharp-edged shafts thrown at him by a lady with bewitching beauty and charming eyes like that of a fawn²? (Doha no. 70 -b)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 60 where the same idea is expressed in relation to Daksha Prajapati who had become very haughty and arrogant when the creator Brahma had appointed him the guardian of his creation. It is said in these two verses that there is no one who does not become haughty and arrogant upon being elevated to a high place or on acquisition of power, authority and honour.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 43 where Lord Ram tells sage Narad that a woman is a personified form of ‘Maya’—that is, just like it is difficult to resist the temptations created by Maya, the lust of passions created by a sensual woman is also too difficult to resist.]

चौ०. गुन कृत सन्यपात नहिं केही । कोउ न मान मद तजेउ निबेही ॥ १ ॥
caupāī.

guna kṛta san'yapāta nahim kēhī. kō'u na māna mada tajē'u nibēhī. 1.

Who is not thrown into a delirium by the combined effect of the three Gunas¹ upon his mind and behaviour just like a person suffering from high fever that is caused by disturbance of the equilibrium between three humours of the body (which usually prove fatal for the person who suffers from such diseases)²?

Who is not stung by the tormentors known as ‘Maan’ and ‘Mada’³? [To wit, it is very difficult not to become proud, arrogant and haughty upon getting honour and fame, or on acquiring a high position in society and being praised for one’s achievements and qualities.] (1)

[Note—¹The three Gunas referred here are the following—Sata Guna, Raja Guna and Tama Guna. The Sata Guna refers to the auspicious qualities in a man; the Tama Guna refers to the worst and the most despicable qualities; and the Raja Gunas refers to the qualities that fall somewhere in between.

According to the philosophy of the Upanishads, every living being has these three Gunas in varying proportions. They control and decide each living being’s behaviour and thought processes that are driven by the combined effect of all these three Gunas working together. If the Sata Guna in a person is the dominant quality, his actions and thought processes would be noble and honourable in the same proportion as the intensity of this Guna in him, and will be opposite to that person in whom the Tama Guna is the dominant one.

²According to the ancient system of medicine called Aurveda, the human body functions properly and remains free from diseases when its three vital humours called ‘Kafa’, ‘Pitta’ and ‘Vayu’ (meaning mucous, bile and vital airs respectively) work harmoniously. If the balance gets disturbed, all sorts of ailments afflict the body.

This analogy is employed here to mean that when there is a perfect balance between the three Gunas of Sata, Raja and Tama, the person acts and thinks sensibly, and his actions and deeds are righteous. A small mismatch of the Gunas creates delusions in him like the mismatched humours that would create the delirium of high fever in a sick person.

³‘Maan’ means getting praise and honour, and ‘Mada’ means its accompanying pride, arrogance and haughtiness. In Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precedes Doha no. 60 this principle has been affirmed with respect to Daksha Prajapati who had become very arrogant and haughty once he was elevated to the post of the guardian of the world by the creator Brahma.]

जोबन ज्वर केहि नहिं बलकावा । ममता केहि कर जस न नसावा ॥ २ ॥

jōbana jvara kēhi nahim balakāvā. mamatā kēhi kara jasa na nasāvā. 2.

Who is not deluded, and becomes wild and reckless under the influence of the fever symbolising ‘Joban’ (youth), and whose fame and good reputation is not marred by ‘Mamta’ (infatuation and worldly attachments)? (2)

[Note—Refer to Doha no. 70 and its preceding Chaupai line nos. 7-8 herein above.

In youth, a person becomes easily excited and is prone to being attracted to all the charms of the material world and the desires they generate in the mind. It is rare to find a youth who can control his natural urges and exercise self-control over his sense organs. It is rare for a youth to overcome all the negative qualities mentioned in these verses, be it anger, lust, passion, desire for gratification, attraction for the charms and material things of the world, desire for pelf, honour and fame, or getting sucked in the vortex of envy and jealousy.

Similar, the sense of attachment with the material world often leads to the downfall of great men who otherwise are held in high esteem by the world. They preach renunciation and about the falsehood of the world, but themselves are knee deep in possessiveness.]

मच्छर काहि कलंक न लावा । काहि न सोक समीर डोलावा ॥ ३ ॥

macchara kāhi kalaṅka na lāvā. kāhi na sōka samīra ḍōlāvā. 3.

Who has not been shamed by ‘Matsarya’ (jealousy and envy)*, and who has not been swayed by the stormy wind of ‘Shoka’ (grief and its associated mental agony, restlessness, anxiety and emotional stress)? (3)

[Note—*According to the Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 1 of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, there are six enemies which are metaphors for the various faults that are associated with a creature. They are the following—Kaam (lust, passions, desires and yearnings), Krodha (anger, indignation, wrathfulness, ill-temper, fury), Lobh (greed, rapacity), Moha (attraction, infatuations, attachments, delusions and ignorance), Mada (arrogance, haughtiness, false pride, hypocrisy and ego) and Matsarya (envy, jealousy, malice and ill-will)

When a man is under the influence of ‘Shoka’ or grief, his mind does not work properly and he becomes very susceptible to committing wrong. He would often do wrong things just in an attempt to overcome his grief without realising that such actions only aggravate his problems.

Grief makes a person lose his mental poise and he becomes depressed and dejected. If it continues for a long time it adversely affects him; he loses his sense of judgement and the ability to adjust to changing circumstances. It affects his personal health and makes a life burden for him. In this state of mind, the person would go to any length to find a way out of his grief, and more often than not he does things that add to his grief instead of decreasing it.

Take the example of king Janak, the father of Sita. He was one of the most self-realised and wise kings of the time; he practiced exemplary self-control over his emotions and was always calm and poised. But when he found that Sita's future was in doldrums and perhaps she would have to remain unmarried for life when none of the assembled princes and kings could lift and break the 'bow' to fulfil the condition for marrying her, Janak was overcome with utter distress and grief. He lost his wisdom and patience, became angry, and vented his ire at the kings and princes by insulting them and calling them impotent in public besides admonishing himself for being so foolish as to arrange for the bow-breaking ceremony. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 251—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 252.]

चिंता साँपिनि को नहिं खाया । को जग जाहि न व्यापी माया ॥ ४ ॥

cintā sāṁpini kō nahim khāyā. kō jaga jāhi na byāpī māyā. 4.

'Chintaa' (worry) is like a serpent, and who is not bitten (negatively affected) by it¹?

Say, who is that person in this world who is not affected and overcome by 'Maya' (delusions)? [To wit, everyone is affected by Maya to a small or great extent. No one is exempt from it; no one can claim that he is immune to the effects of Maya.] (4)

[Note—¹The bite of a snake is fatal; it's horrifying and tormenting. Rarely does a person escape death if bitten by a snake. This is used as a metaphor to emphasise the point that a person who harbours worries in his mind is virtually injected by a strong dose of poison that is bound to have a detrimental effect on his mind and health. His health decays and his mental abilities decline. In the long run his life is shortened and his productivity reduced. He becomes depressed, dejected and listless.

The debilitating effect of 'worries' (cintā) is also mentioned in Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 12 that says that the worry of being killed by his inimical brother Baali had been tormenting Sugriv like a deadly festering wound in his heart.]

कीट मनोरथ दारु सरीरा । जेहि न लाग घुन को अस धीरा ॥ ५ ॥

kīṭa manōratha dāru sarīrā. jēhi na lāga ghuna kō asa dhīrā. 5.

Is there anyone so resolute of mind that his body is not consumed by 'Manorath' (desire, wish, yearning; longing for something; determination to do or acquire anything; worldly aspirations) just like wood that is made hollow by an insect (such as the white ant) that eats into its pith by boring into it? (5)

[Note—The last word ‘Dhiraa’ (dhīrā) in this verse also means to be courageous and brave in the face of odds and adversity. This obviously refers to the state of a person’s mind and intellect. A person who does not allow his mind to become affected by adversities and misfortunes, whose mind is not agitated by even the greatest of provocations, whose intellect is strong enough to think coherently, wisely and analytically inspite of the all the uncertainties and turbulence surrounding him in this world—such a man is said to be a ‘Dhira’, a brave person who courageously faces adversities and misfortunes with fortitude, equanimity, calmness of mind and determination. He is ‘brave and courageous’ because he is able to maintain full control over his mind and responses of the body when faced with worries and failures to achieve desired results, when his aspirations are not fulfilled.

Desires and longings arise in the mind, and then the mind instructs the body to make efforts to fulfil them. The poor body has to obey the commands of the mind. If the mind is strong and understands what should be its priorities, then it would not push the body beyond its limits of endurance to go after things that are beyond its means. This helps both the mind and the body to have peace.

Realisable goals are okay, but again the wise man with a ‘resolute mind’ prepares himself for adverse results and does not worry unduly about them.

The word ‘consumed’ here implies that if a man is of a weak frame of mind, then his whole being, his entire life is spent in pursuing his desires and aspirations. He thinks of nothing else but ways and means to fulfil his wishes. If he is not able to fulfil them, his physical health suffers in the same way as when worry overtakes him.

Desires and worries go hand in hand. A man of a weak mind first harbours a desire, and since his mind is irresolute he does not know what to do or what course of action he must pursue so that his wishes are fulfilled. When given choice, he is uncertain which amongst them to select. And if his wishes are not fulfilled he starts blaming himself and all around him. His health is adversely affected; he would not eat and rest properly; his behaviour become restless and his faculties do not work in the same way as that of a man who is not too concerned about fulfilment of desires, and rather learns to take everything in his stride.

So we see that having ‘worries’ (verse no. 4) and having ‘desires’ (verse no. 5) are two factors that destroy a person’s peace of mind; they are virtually the two sides of the same coin. They together negatively affect a person’s overall health—both of his physical body as well as of his mind and intellect. He starts brooding and becomes forlorn, depressed, dejected and withdrawn.

But when would these two negative factors affect him? The answer is: When his mind is not strong and resolute enough to remain steady and overcome the numerous ups and downs of life by realising that everything can’t happen as one wishes, that there is no benefit in worrying or lamenting as they will only harm the person instead of doing him any good.

Similarly, being too obsessed with success makes a man depressed at the slightest hint of failure, and again this happens when his mind is weak and does not realise that everything can’t happen the way one wants them to happen.

The man who has a strong and steady mind would be able to deflect all sorts of emotional and sentimental storms that buffet him in the course of his life. He takes successes and failures in his stride. Instead of worrying about anything, he takes such steps that would help him to overcome the cause of the worry.

Likewise, if a man is contented with whatever he gets in life, believing in the Lord God and having trust in him that the Lord would take care of him and his

necessities, when he believes that successes and failures are parts of the game known as ‘life’, then desires and hopes would not negatively affect him if they go unrequited.]

सुत बित लोक ईषना तीनी । केहि कै मति इन्ह कृत न मलीनी ॥ ६ ॥

suta bita lōka īṣanā tīnī. kēhi kai mati inha kṛta na malīnī. 6.

Whose mind and intellect are not overwhelmed and polluted by the threefold desires related to (i) a son (progeny), (ii) wealth and material prosperity, and (iii) worldly fame and name? [To wit, it is rare to find a single person whose mind is not obsessed by these three things—progeny, wealth and fame.] (6)

[Note—This verse is directly related to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 70 which talks about ‘Trishna’. Here three types of desires are specifically mentioned—desires related to a son (such as the desire to see one’s son being successful in studies, business, professional life etc., or see him being praised by the world, or having a son with an excellent personality, and so on), to wealth and material prosperity, and to acquisition of name and fame.

These three longings are overwhelming for a man. It is almost impossible to resist them. Naturally, any desire of any kind will surely rob a man of his peace of mind as has been stressed in all the foregoing verses.

The idea is that all these factors are different manifestations of ‘Maya’: all of them are ‘family of Maya’ and closely related to it. It is Maya—the ‘whirlpool of delusions’ pertaining to this gross material and perishable world—that is at the root of all these factors.

What is meant by this? Well, a wise and enlightened man realises that the true identity of a person is his ‘Atma’, his ‘pure conscious soul that resides in the body’, and that this soul is on its journey through the world because of certain circumstances or developments in the past when this Atma had allowed its self to be surrounded by certain veil of misfortunes that weighed down upon it heavily and forced it to assume the current body. Each single individual with whom he comes in contact in this world is similarly weighed down by his own set of circumstances of the past; each individual’s Atma or his ‘true self’ is on his own independent journey. Their meeting and interaction is merely coincidental like countless passengers travelling to a same destination in a train. They forge friendship, share stories and food and addresses, and then forget everything once they reach their designated destinations.

A man with a steady and wise mind would therefore not be swayed by any kind of inputs from the world. He knows that his progeny is just another soul who is destined to have some sort of temporary contact with him, and that the son or the daughter has his or her own destiny and journey of life.

Similarly, a wise and erudite man realises that this material world and its sense objects are there only till that time his physical body lives in this world, and that one or the other day when his body ages and he dies everything would be left behind. So there is no use in crying over them unduly.

What is name and fame in a world that is driven by selfishness, and is of a short memory? People throng around those with whom they hope to satisfy some of their own interests, and no one would bother to pay a dime for an enlightened man

who would try to wean them away from delusions and show them the correct path. People call such men as misleading the world.]

यह सब माया कर परिवारा । प्रबल अमिति को बरनै पारा ॥ ७ ॥

yaha saba māyā kara parivārā. prabala amiti kō baranai pārā. 7.

All the negative qualities mentioned herein above are deemed to be the ‘Family of Maya’¹.

They are very powerful and strong; they form an extended family with countless members, each with its own polluting effects and corrupting abilities, and working together to serve their principal, the Maya².

It is not possible for anyone to count them or describe how they work in tandem to delude the creature. (7)

[Note—¹The entities that are different variations of Maya—i.e. factors that incite worldly delusions in a man—as named in these verses, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 70—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 71, are the following:--

Moha (attachment, infatuation), Kaam (lust, passion), Trishna (desires, yearning), Krodha (anger; fury; wrath), Lobha (greed), Sri Mada (pride of self; pride of honour and achievements, of worldly prosperity and wealth), Gunas (the three inherent qualities of Sata, Raja and Tama Gunas that every living being possesses, and which mould his character and personality), Maana-Mada (arrogance and haughtiness that comes with honour, success and respect), Joban Jwar (the recklessness and arrogance of youth), Mamta (affection and attachment to worldly things), Matsarya (envy, jealousy), Shoka (grief), Chinta (worry), Maya (delusions), Manorath (hopes, aspirations, vows, desires, determination to do this and achieve that), and the trio consisting of son/progeny-wealth/prosperity-fame/good name.

They are all close associates of Maya, their ‘boss’. They foster Maya and work in tandem with it. They are like an extended family of Maya; they all help each other, and have the same gene in them—the characteristic quality of ‘delusion’ that is the common factor with all of them. All of them produce delusion of some kind, and all of them therefore rob the creature of his peace and happiness, as well as affect negatively the stability of mind and reasoning ability of the intellect.

²Besides the specific negative qualities named in the foregoing verses, there are many more others that are natural off-shoots of the primary ones just like a huge banyan tree having a main trunk—which here is the ‘Maya’, from which the main branches of the tree spread out in all the directions—which are represented by the negative qualities named in these verses, and then there are so many countless other smaller sub-branches and shoots that give the shape of a thick canopy around the tree, making it look huge and cover an extensive area around the main trunk. These countless smaller shoots and sub-branches of the main tree are like the many negative qualities that are subsidiaries or ancillaries of the main negative qualities mentioned in this discussion.

These are discussed later on in this Chapter called Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 116—to Doha no. 118. Briefly these other off shoots of Maya are (i) the darkness caused by Moha (worldly attachments, attractions and

infatuations), and its companion known as Avidya (ignorance). We shall read them in due course. It is said there that misconception about the reality that causes a lot of delusions, confusions and doubts (“Vram” and “Bheda”, which are synonyms of Maya), and worldly attractions (known as Moha) are all like the ‘family of Avidya’—refer: Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precede Doha no. 118.

The way and the mean to overcome the negative affects of Maya are (i) Bhakti (having devotion for Lord God—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precedes Doha no. 116), (ii) Shradha (firm faith and belief in the Lord as well as on the immaculacy and purity of the Atma which is the true self of the Jiva and is consciousness personified—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 117), and (iii) other auspicious and eclectic virtues such as Yam and Niyam, practicing Tapa, Japa, Vrat, Dharma, Dama, Satya and Vairagya etc., acquiring wisdom and knowledge, and being enlightened and self-realised—all of which are enumerated from Chaupai line no. 10 that precedes Doha no. 117—to Doha no. 119.]

सिव चतुरानन जाहि डेराहीं । अपर जीव केहि लेखे माहीं ॥ ८ ॥

siva caturānana jāhi ḍērāhīm. apara jīva kēhi lēkhē māhīm. 8.

When even the two powerful Gods of the Trinity, i.e. Lord Shiva and Lord Brahma (who is also known as ‘Chaturanan’ because he has four heads, enabling him to see in all the four directions of his creation simultaneously) are afraid of ‘Maya’ and its powerful negative influences¹, then say what do ordinary creatures of this world count?

[To wit, when Shiva and Brahma, who are two senior gods of this creation, fear to annoy Maya and are afraid that they would be affected by its negative and corrupting influences, then other creatures, including the other junior gods, have no chance of opposing the onslaught of Maya.]¹ (8)

[Note—¹Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 60 where Brahma acknowledges that Maya has not spared him; and Chaupai line no. 10 that precedes Doha no. 62 where Lord Shiva affirms that there is no one so wise and enlightened that he would escape being deluded under the influence of Maya.

Inspite of this fact that Maya is so powerful that it can instill fear in the mind of such powerful gods as Shiva and Brahma who themselves are wise and fully able to look after themselves, it (Maya) is like a timid maid in front of the Supreme Being represented by Lord Ram, who in turn is a human manifestation of Lord Vishnu, the cosmic form of the Supreme Being known also as the Viraat Purush. Therefore, Maya cannot play tricks with its Lord, the Supreme Being. Rather, Maya has to dance to the tune set by Lord Ram. This is endorsed in Doha no. 71 (b) that follows below.

Further, ‘Maya’ (worldly delusions) is regarded as a dancer who is very cunning. She is herself afraid of ‘Bhakti’ (the auspicious virtue of devotion for Lord God) that is personified as another maid of the Lord, but his favourite. This being the case, the dancer maid (Maya) is afraid to offend the maid who is the Lord’s favourite (i.e. Bhakti). This simply means that a person who has Bhakti in him is free from the negative affects of Maya. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precede Doha no. 116.

Later on in this story we read that sage Kaagbhusund has himself asserted that ever since Lord Ram had blessed him and accepted him as one of his devotees, Maya had stopped tormenting him—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 89.]

दो०. ब्यापि रहेउ संसार महुँ माया कटक प्रचंड ।
सेनापति कामादि भट दंभ कपट पाषंड ॥ ७१ (क) ॥
dōhā.

byāpi rahē'u sansāra mahum̐ māyā kaṭaka pracanḍa.
sēnāpati kāmādi bhaṭa dambha kapaṭa pāṣanḍa. 71 (a).

{In this Doha, the symbolism of an army is used to emphasise how strong and powerful Maya is, and what are the different units of this symbolic army.}

The huge, invincible and fierce army of 'Maya' is spread all over the world (i.e. Maya is all-pervading and very powerful, conquering the entire world and marking its presence everywhere).

'Kaam' and others are the chief Generals of this army. [The other Generals of this symbolic army of Maya, besides Kaam, are—Krodha and Lobha.]

The warriors of this army are 'Dambha' (hypocrisy), 'Kapat' (deceit, conceit, fraud), and 'Pakhand' (pretence; falsehood)¹. (Doha no. 71-a)

[Note—¹In verse no. 7 that precedes this Doha we have read about the 'family' of Maya. Besides the entities listed in the foregoing verses, these three mentioned here are the other members of Maya's extended family.

Maya is like an emperor or king having a huge army consisting of all the negative and corrupting factors enumerated in these verses. Just like the army obeys the command of its emperor or king and serves the interest of its lord, the emperor or the king, all the entities mentioned in this discussion serve Maya and aid in its efforts to keep the world under its delusory spell.

Saying that Maya's army is present everywhere means that no one in this world is free from the domineering presence and fear of Maya.]

सो दासी रघुबीर के समुझें मिथ्या सोपि ।
छूट न राम कृपा बिनु नाथ कहउँ पद रोपि ॥ ७१ (ख) ॥

sō dāsī raghubīra kai samujhēm mithyā sōpi.
chūṭa na rāma kṛpā binu nātha kaha'um̐ pada rōpi. 71 (b).

But that Maya is nothing but a maid of Lord Raghubir (Ram, the brave prince of the Raghu's line of kings of Ayodhya)¹.

Though it seems to be far-fetched and false, but the truth of the matter is that the grip of Maya cannot be broken without the grace and mercy of Lord Ram. I (sage Kaagbhusund) can say this affirmatively and with utmost confidence². (Doha no. 71-b)

[Note—¹Lord Ram was an incarnation of the Supreme Being. Maya is likened to a maid of the Lord and a dancer. The other maid that serves the Lord is Bhakti (devotion). Lord Ram is favourable towards the maid known as Bhakti because of her good virtues and character as opposed to the other maid named Maya who is cunning and full of deceit and pretence. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precede Doha no. 116.

²Maya is afraid of no one else but the Lord. Anyone upon whom Lord Ram shows his grace is free from the corrupting influences of Maya. This is stressed by Kaagbhusund elsewhere also, such as Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 89.]

चौ०. जो माया सब जगहि नचावा । जासु चरित लखि काहुँ न पावा ॥ १ ॥

सोइ प्रभु भू बिलास खगराजा । नाच नटी इव सहित समाजा ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

jō māyā saba jagahi nacāvā. jāsu carita lakhi kāhum' na pāvā. 1.

sō'i prabhu bhrū bilāsa khagarājā. nāca naṭī iva sahita samājā. 2.

That maverick Maya which makes the whole world dance to its tunes, and is so mysterious that no one is able to know its true character and nature (and therefore, by extension, how it will influence the creature and what negative consequences would follow in its wake also remains a mystery), --- (1)

Oh King of Birds (Garud), that same Maya dances like a puppet, along with her entire troupe of attendants, to the subtle signals given by the movement of Lord Ram's eyebrows. (2)

[Note—The same idea that Maya is like a dancer is expressed in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 116. In this context it is also said here that Maya is afraid of Bhakti, another maid of Lord Ram, because the Lord is favourable to Bhakti.

Maya is so domineering in this creation that even Lord Shiva and Lord Brahma are afraid of its tricks (refer: Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 71 herein above). But Maya herself is afraid of Lord Ram because he is the Supreme Lord of creation.

'Dancing according to the signals given by the movement of Lord Ram's eyebrows' is a figure of speech meaning that Maya does the Lord's bidding, it completely obeys the Lord and never dares to play its dirty tricks upon the Lord just like a court dancer who never dares to play fools with the emperor or the king.

The court dancer is very alert and cautious to synchronise all her dance moves and gestures which are liked by the king. She is careful not to do or say anything that is not like by her master and lord, the king; she is not concerned if the other courtiers are please with her or not as long as she manages to please the king. If any of her moves and songs are not liked by the king, he may not explicitly express his displeasure in an open court but hints to the courtesan with a movement of his

eyebrows, such as raising them, or arching them and frowning at her. She immediately picks up the cue and changes her stance instantly.

Similarly, Maya keeps a close watch whether or not her actions and deeds are liked by Lord Ram. If she finds that she has annoyed the Lord by casting her evil spell on someone favoured by the Lord such as his devotee, and this has not been liked by the Lord when he indicates his disapproval by arching his eyebrows, Maya immediately stops her tricks and lets that person rest in peace.

It means that Maya is very obedient to Lord Ram, and therefore it does not touch the Lord's devotees. One such example is sage Kaagbhusund himself as he is not at all affected by the negative influences of Maya by the grace of Lord Ram. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 89. Maya has no guts to oppose anyone upon whom Lord Ram is favourable. This is the central idea of this Doha.]

सोइ सच्चिदानंद घन रामा । अज बिग्यान रूप बल धामा ॥ ३ ॥

ब्यापक ब्याप्य अखंड अनंता । अखिल अमोघसक्ति भगवंता ॥ ४ ॥

sō'i saccidānanda ghana rāmā. aja bigyāna rūpa bala dhāmā. 3.
byāpaka byāpya akhaṇḍa anantā. akhila amōghasakti bhagavantā. 4.

Lord Ram (whom you saw being ensnared by the magical rope of snakes in the battle-field of Lanka) is the same Supreme Being who is an embodiment of bliss that is characteristic of pure Consciousness (saccidānanda ghana).

Indeed, the Lord is without a birth (aja), is a personified form of all truthful knowledge and wisdom (bigyāna rūpa), is a treasury of strength and power (bala dhāmā), --- (3)

--- is all-pervading and omnipresent in the universe (byāpaka byāpya), is immutable and indivisible (akhaṇḍa), is eternal and without a beginning or end (anantā), is complete in himself and incorporates the entire creation in his own self (akhila), and is the Lord God of the creation who is invincible, who possesses all might, power and authority (amōghasakti bhagavantā). (4)

अगुन अदभ्र गिरा गोतीता । सबदरसी अनवद्य अजीता ॥ ५ ॥

निर्मम निराकार निरमोहा । नित्य निरंजन सुख संदोहा ॥ ६ ॥

aguna adabhra girā gōtītā. sabadarasī anavadya ajītā. 5.
nirmama nirākāra niramohā. nitya niranjana sukha sandohā. 6.

He (Lord Ram) is attributeless (aguna), is all-encompassing and extends even beyond everything that exists (adabhra), is beyond the reach and purview of speech and words (girā gōtītā), is all-seeing, all-knowing and omniscient (sabadarasī), is beyond understanding and reach of the senses (anavadya), is invincible (ajītā) --- (5)

--- is pure, incorruptible and free from blemishes (nirmama), is formless (nirākāra), is free from the tainting effects of delusions, ignorance, attachments and infatuations of all kinds (niramōhā), is immutable, steady and unchanging at all times and eras (nitya), is faultless, flawless, uncorrupted, untainted and without any blemishes of any kind (niranjana), and is bliss and beatitude personified (sukha sandōhā). (6)

प्रकृति पार प्रभु सब उर बासी । ब्रह्म निरीह बिरज अबिनासी ॥ ७ ॥
इहाँ मोह कर कारन नाही । रबि सन्मुख तम कबहुँ कि जाहीं ॥ ८ ॥

prakṛti pāra prabhu saba ura bāsī. brahma nirīha biraja abināsī. 7.
ihām mōha kara kārana nāhīm. rabi sanmukha tama kabahum ki jāhīm. 8.

The Lord transcends Prakriti (Nature; Matter) (prakṛti pāra prabhu). The Lord resides in the subtle heart of all living beings in the form of pure consciousness that is known as their Atma, which is their ‘true self’ (prabhu saba ura bāsī).

Indeed and in all sooth and without any gainsay, the Lord is none else but Brahm, the Supreme Being and the cosmic Consciousness in a personified form (brahma). This being the case, the Lord (Sri Ram) is free from all passions and desires to do this and that (nirīha).

This is the grand reputation and the exalted stature of the Lord who is imperishable and eternal (biraja abināsī)¹. (7)

Be warned and be careful to understand that there is no scope of delusions and confusions to find any ground to stand upon with respect to Lord Ram and his divinity and holiness. Say, can darkness ever approach the sun?

[To wit, just as darkness and sun cannot exist together, Lord Ram and all sorts of negativities and spiritual darkness associated with ignorance about the Reality and neglect of the Truth can’t stay together.]² (8)

[Note—¹All the unique qualities and excellent virtues of Lord Ram that are listed in Chaupais herein above are also cited elsewhere in Ram Charit Manas. Some of the instances are found in Baal Kand—such as (i) Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 13; (ii) Chanda line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 51; (iii) Doha no. 198; (iv) Doha no. 199; (v) Doha no. 295.

Lord Ram is Brahm personified, yet he acted like an ordinary human being to show what fate the ‘pure consciousness’, that possesses all these grand virtues listed herein above, faces if it begins to identify itself with the gross body of a creature. To wit, if the Supreme Being would act in the way he did, one can well imagine the fate of ordinary living beings. But the upside of this is that Lord Ram showed to the world by his own life’s example that it is indeed possible for a person to lead an exemplarily right and auspicious life in accordance to the principles of Dharma (laws of proper and right conduct, thought and action) inspite of facing the greatest of adversities, uncertainties, dilemmas and temptations in one’s life in this world.

At the same time the Lord also showed that inspite of taking all precautions a person is apt to make mistakes of omission and commission, but he should not be overly perturbed by it because this is a part and parcel of life in this gross mundane

world, and one should take all things, both favourable and unfavourable, in one's stride and move on.

But then, what would distinguish a good man from a bad one? It's the quantum of goodness and good virtues in him, it's the quality of deeds done by him and the virtuousness of life that he leads which would distinguish the two types of persons in a given set of situations.

²Kaagbhusund has politely chided Garud here for the doubts that he had harboured about the divine reality of Lord Ram by using this analogy of the darkness not being able to live in the presence of the sun. Lord Ram is like the 'sun' here, and the doubts and confusions that Garud had are like the various shades of 'darkness'. Both are incompatible with each other.

Therefore, now that Garud has heard the sacred story pertaining to the divinity of Lord Ram, it is expected that the darkness of ignorance present inside him would automatically vanish.]

दो०. भगत हेतु भगवान प्रभु राम धरेउ तनु भूप ।

किए चरित पावन परम प्राकृत नर अनुरूप ॥ ७२ (क) ॥

dōhā.

bhagata hētu bhagavāna prabhu rāma dharē'u tanu bhūpa.

ki'ē carita pāvana parama prākṛta nara anurūpa. 72 (a).

[Kaagbhusund explained that—] Lord Ram had assumed the form of a King (of Ayodhya) for the benefit of his devotees¹, and then performed so many deeds and took so many actions that were sacred and holy like an ordinary human being to act as a source of guidance and inspiration for them. He behaved like an ordinary human, though he was beyond the reach of Nature. (Doha no. 72-a)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 187; (ii) Doha no. 192; (iii) Doha no. 198; (iv) Doha no. 199 ; (v) Doha no. 205; and (b) Kishkindha Kand, Doha no. 26 which is explicit on this point.

In this context, see the note that has been appended to Chaupai line no. 7-8 herein above.]

जथा अनेक बेष धरि नृत्य करइ नट कोइ ।

सोइ सोइ भाव देखावइ आपुन होइ न सोइ ॥ ७२ (ख) ॥

jathā anēka bēṣa dhari nṛtya kara'i naṭa kō'i.

sō'i sō'i bhāva dēkhāva'i āpuna hō'i na sō'i. 72 (b).

It is just like the case of an expert actor who does various deeds, assumes different guises and the personality of different characters, and exhibits a myriad of emotions and sentiments while he is performing on stage so much so that it becomes difficult to realise who he actually is, but himself he remains the same person.

[To wit, though an expert actor appears to be an absolutely different person while he is acting on stage and assumes different roles assigned to him, but off-stage he is the same old person known to his friends and compatriots. Similarly, Brahm, the Supreme Being, acted like an ordinary human being when he was in the role of a King of Ayodhya called ‘Lord Sri Ram’, but Lord Ram’s primary form always remained that of Brahm who is the Supreme Being of this creation.]¹ (Doha no. 72-b)

[Note—¹The same idea is expressed in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 205.]

चौ०. असि रघुपति लीला उरगारी । दनुज बिमोहनि जन सुखकारी ॥ १ ॥
जे मति मलिन बिषयबस कामी । प्रभु पर मोह धरहिं इमि स्वामी ॥ २ ॥
caupāī.

asi raghupati līlā uragārī. danuja bimōhani jana sukhakārī. 1.
jē mati malina biṣayabasa kāmī. prabhu para mōha dharahim imi svāmī. 2.

[Kaagbhusund continued—] Oh the ‘enemy of serpents’ (“uragārī”—a reference to Garud)¹! Such is the mystical story and the maverick deeds done by Lord Ram, the Lord of the lineage of Kings descending from Raghu (raghupati), that they delude the demons (into believing that he was an ordinary human prince) while it gives immense pleasure and delight to the devotees (as they bask in the Lord’s glories and exult in his remembrance)². (1)

Oh Lord (“svāmī”—i.e. Garud)! Only those whose mind and heart are dark, pervert and impure (mati malina), those who are tempted by the pleasure of the senses and are attached to the sense objects of the world (biṣayabasa), and those who are rendered slaves of passion, lust and longing (kāmī)—they are the ones who cast doubts on the divinity of Lord Ram and have delusions about his holiness. (2)

[Note—¹Garud can gobble up snakes, and therefore he is called an ‘enemy of serpents’. It was he who had freed Lord Ram from the snare of serpents in the battle-field of Lanka by devouring all of them. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 73, and Doha no. 74-a.

²Lord Shiva has also expressed a similar view to his consort Parvati in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 113.]

नयन दोष जा कहँ जब होई । पीत बरन ससि कहँ कह सोई ॥ ३ ॥
जब जेहि दिसि भ्रम होइ खगेसा । सो कह पच्छिम उयउ दिनेसा ॥ ४ ॥

nayana dōṣa jā kaham̐ jaba hōī. pīta barana sasi kahum̐ kaha sōī. 3.
jaba jēhi disi bhrama hō'i khagēsā. sō kaha pacchima uya'u dinēsā. 4.

[Citing some day-to-day examples, Kaagbhusund clarifies how this is made possible.]
When someone suffers from distortion of eyesight or suffers from some serious

disease of the eye (such as presence of thick layer of yellow mucous in it, or cataract formation at some stage), he would say that the disc of the moon is tinged yellow! (3)

Similarly, if someone is bewildered and does not know how to read the compass, he would say that the sun has risen in the west!¹ (4)

[Note—¹Everyone knows that both these observations are absurd and imply that the person who says them is out of his senses. But from the perspective of the person who makes these ridiculous statements, they are the facts as he sees them.

Similarly, from the viewpoint of the person who has a pervert and dark mind, who finds charm in the gross material world and remains submerged in it, thinking it to be the end of all existence, who does not realise that there is something higher and more sublime than life in this mortal world, who fails to see the subtle and universal Truth that lies beyond the visible world perceived by his senses—only such deluded persons would treat Lord Ram as a human being like themselves. They look at everything from the pinhole of their limited understanding of life and its truth; they fail to realise that there is something beyond their perception, something that is called ‘transcendental consciousness’ that is out of their reach.

Such persons regard the gross physical body of an individual as his or her identity. They do not know that the ‘real identity’ of an individual is his or her ‘soul’ which is ‘pure consciousness’ is a cosmic and universal entity that is transcendental, sublime, immaculate and eternal by its inherent nature. Lord Ram represents this ‘Universal Cosmic Consciousness’.

Even as it is difficult, if not impossible, to convince the man with a defective eyesight who sees the moon as being of an yellow colour, or the man who cannot read the compass and says that the sun has risen in the west, that what they see and say are absolutely wrong, it is also difficult, if not impossible, to convince a deluded man who has an evil mind that Lord Ram is not a human being but the Supreme Being himself in his form. He would make all sorts of arguments and throw tantrums if contradicted.]

नौकारूढ़ चलत जग देखा । अचल मोह बस आपुहि लेखा ॥ ५ ॥

बालक भ्रमहिं न भ्रमहिं गृहादी । कहहिं परस्पर मिथ्याबादी ॥ ६ ॥

naukārūṛha calata jaga dēkhā. acala mōha basa āpuhi lēkhā. 5.

bālaka bhramahiṁ na bhramahiṁ grhādī. kahahiṁ paraspara mithyābādī. 6.

[Citing another practical example, Kaagbhusund says—] When a man is riding a boat he erroneously believes that he is standing still in the water but the world surrounding him is on the move. (5)

Similarly, when children are playing, some of them start whirling around in circles and see the things in the house around them turning in the opposite direction. When other members of the household or other children who are standing there to watch tell them that nothing is moving and it is they who are turning in a circle, those children who are whirling just wouldn’t believe and they start arguing with others who tell them the fact, and by-and-by each group starts calling the other a liar.

[To wit, this also happens between those who are believers and devotees of the Lord, and those who are non-believers and non-devotees. Neither of the two would be able to convince the other of the reality; each group thinks that what it says is the correct thing.] (6)

हरि बिषइक अस मोह बिहंगा । सपनेहुँ नहिँ अग्यान प्रसंगा ॥ ७ ॥

hari biṣa'ika asa mōha bihaṅgā. Sapanēhum' nahim agyāna prasaṅgā. 7.

Oh the King of Birds (bihaṅgā)! In the same way, it is erroneous to think that Lord Hari (i.e. Lord Ram in this case, as he was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu whose other name is 'Hari') has got deluded, bewildered or confused.

[To wit, when one is deluded, bewildered and confused about the truth and reality himself, he sees Lord Ram from a purely human perspective and comes to wrong conclusions about the authenticity, the divinity and holiness of Lord Ram.]

Otherwise, there is no question of Lord Ram being deluded, bewildered or confused even in a dream. (7)

मायाबस मतिमंद अभागी । हृदयँ जमनिका बहुबिधि लागी ॥ ८ ॥

ते सठ हठ बस संसय करहीं । निज अग्यान राम पर धरहीं ॥ ९ ॥

māyābasa matimanda abhāgī. Hṛdayam' jamanikā bahubidhi lāgī. 8.
tē saṭha haṭha basa sansaya karahīm. nija agyāna rāma para dharahīm. 9.

Those who are unfortunate enough to be under the spell of Maya (delusions), those whose mind is corrupt and darkened by evil thoughts, and those whose heart has a curtain of worldly taints hanging over it, thereby veiling the truth from them, --- (8)

--- Such people are indeed the stupid and unlucky ones who harbour stubborn, irrational and unwarranted doubts in their mind and heart about the divinity and holiness of Lord Ram. Being thus misled by the distorted or corrupted perception of the truth and reality of the Lord, they are inclined to impose their own ignorance and delusions upon Lord Ram (treating him to be an ordinary human prince instead of being aware of the fact that he is a manifestation of the Supreme Being in a human form). (9)

दो०. काम क्रोध मद लोभ रत गृहासक्त दुखरूप ।

ते किमि जानहिँ रघुपतिहि मूढ़ परे तम कूप ॥ ७३ (क) ॥

dōhā.

kāma krōdha mada lōbha rata grhāsakta dukharūpa.
tē kimi jānahim raghupatihi mūṛha parē tama kūpa. 73 (a).

Verily indeed, those who are engrossed in having lust and passion, in anger and wrathfulness, in arrogance and haughtiness, in greed and avarice, and in the various affairs of the household, all of which represent different forms of miseries, sorrows and grief—say, how can such utterly unfortunate and mentally incompetent persons understand the sublime nature and the truth of Lord Raghupati (Sri Ram)?

Such stupid and unfortunate persons have fallen in a dark well of ignorance and delusions.

[To wit, just like the case of a person who has fallen in a dark well and thereby suffers from interminable misery, sorrow and grief throughout his life, such persons who cast aspersions on Lord Ram never find peace and happiness in their lives; they are always miserable and torn between doubts and perplexities. They have no where to go to find spiritual peace and happiness for their tormented soul.] (Doha no. 73-a)

निर्गुन रूप सुलभ अति सगुन जान नहिं कोइ ।

सुगम अगम नाना चरित सुनि मुनि मन भ्रम होइ ॥ ७३ (ख) ॥

nirguna rūpa sulabha ati saguna jāna nahim kō'i.

sugama agama nānā carita suni muni mana bhrama hō'i. 73 (b).

The Lord's form that is attributeless and invisible to the physical eye may be quite easy to understand or realise (by those who have deeply studied and understood the principles of the scriptures to attain self-realisation and enlightenment, to know what the 'self' is, what is the entity called the Atma, and what is meant by the term 'true self' and 'pure cosmic consciousness').

But no one is able to properly understand the reality and the truth of the Lord's form that is visible and has attributes. [This is because this form of the Lord has so many similarities with other individuals that a person finds it difficult to come to terms to the fact that Lord Ram is the Supreme Being himself, and is not one like other human beings, albeit being more noble, wise, virtuous and superior as compared to others.]

Hence, even the wisest amongst the sages and seers get confused about the reality when they hear of the countless and varied deeds done by the Lord and actions taken by him in his form as a human being. This is because often times the Lord's visible behaviour and the deeds done by him do not seem to conform to his actual form of being the Supreme Lord of the world, and at other times his actions and behaviour are such that transcend comprehension, and which no human being can emulate¹. (Doha no. 73-b)

[Note—¹A few simple examples would clarify this point. Lord Ram had wailed and searched for his wife Sita like an ordinary man would whose dear wife has been abducted by some wicked person. One wonders that if he was indeed the Supreme Being who is supposed to be all-knowing and above such emotions, why then Lord Ram behave in this way like an ordinary man?

On the other hand, during the marriage ceremony held for Sita at Janakpur, the Lord had easily lifted and broken the 'bow of Lord Shiva' that none of the greatest kings and princes of the time could as much as move an inch from the ground. Then, countless blood-thirsty and ferocious demons who had spread terror even in the hearts of all-powerful Gods, were killed easily by the Lord single-handedly. If any human

being could achieve this feat, why then were the demons not eliminated earlier. Why the great sages and hermits who were being tormented by these demons could not use their own mystical powers or seek the help of mighty kings and princes of the earth to eliminate this scourge; why had they sought the intervention of Lord Vishnu in the form of Lord Ram to achieve this objective?

Surely then, there is more than what meets the eye! It's not easy to understand Lord Ram.]

चौ०. सुनु खगेस रघुपति प्रभुताई । कहउँ जथामति कथा सुहाई ॥ १ ॥

जेहि बिधि मोह भयउ प्रभु मोही । सोउ सब कथा सुनावउँ तोही ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

sunu khagēsa raghupati prabhutāī. kaha'um̐ jathāmati kathā suhāī. 1.

jēhi bidhi mōha bhaya'u prabhu mōhī. sō'u saba kathā sunāva'um̐ tōhī. 2.

[Kaagbhusund said—] ‘Oh the King of Birds (Garud—“khagēsa”)! Please listen to me. Now I shall tell you about the greatness, the majesty, the glory and divinity of Lord Ram (prabhutāī) who was the Lord of the lineage of King descending from Raghu of Ayodhya (raghupati). This narration is extremely pleasant and exhilarating to hear, and I shall narrate this delightful story to you according to my best of abilities and knowledge. (1)

Oh Lord (prabhu)! I shall also tell you the whole story of how I myself fell prey to delusions and got overwhelmed by confusions and doubts¹. (2)

[Note—¹Kaagbhusund wished to tell Garud that the latter should not feel sorry and regret for being deluded and getting confused, for he (Kaagbhusund) had also fallen prey to the powerful forces of Maya. No one should be proud and have ego in him that he is so much favoured by the Lord God that he would become immune to the forces of Nature or is superior to other fellow creatures just by the virtue of his closeness to the Lord, either by serving him directly as was the case with Garud, or by being the Lord's faithful devotee as Kaagbhusund was. Refer Chaupai line no. 5 herein below where this thing is reiterated.

The simple fact is that the Lord loves all his creatures in equal measure, though of course he has a soft corner for his devotees, followers and subordinates who serve him selflessly, for whom the only source of happiness, joy, solace and succour in life is the Lord and no one else. This is specifically endorsed by Lord Ram himself in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 87 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it.

Another reason why Kaagbhusund chose to tell his own story about the way he was overcome by delusions and how by the grace of Lord Ram he got rid of it was to make discourse and narrative more convincing for Garud—because it meant that the speaker was telling something he had witnessed himself and his advice is based on his personal experience rather than on some theoretical or hypothetical theory that he has read in some ancient scripture. It means that his advice has a practical value, and is not just empty discourse.]

राम कृपा भाजन तुम्ह ताता । हरि गुन प्रीति मोहि सुखदाता ॥ ३ ॥
ताते नहिं कछु तुम्हहिं दुरावउँ । परम रहस्य मनोहर गावउँ ॥ ४ ॥

rāma kṛpā bhājana tumha tātā. hari guna prīti mōhi sukhadātā. 3.
tātē nahim kachu tumhahim durāva'um̐. parama rahasya manōhara gāva'um̐.
4.

Oh Dear (tātā)! You are favoured by Lord Ram; he has been graceful upon you. You have endearment for Lord Hari (Sri Ram) and honour the Lord's excellent virtues. This has made you sincerely interested in hearing the sacred story of the Lord, and this quality in you has pleased me very much. (3)

This is the reason why I shall conceal nothing from you, and sing (describe or narrate) for your benefit and good even the most esoteric of secrets pertaining to the Lord¹. (4)

[Note—¹The story of Lord Ram, known as 'Ram Charit', should be described in all its finer nuances and intricate details only to those who are eligible to listen to it, who would understand the events in the correct light and not twist facts and distort the story out of context to suit their own prejudiced interpretation. It is just like the principle that the secrets of nuclear science should not be taught to all, because if it lands in wrong hands and rogue elements in the society, it would be a disaster for all of human kind.

If the listener has a corrupted mind and pervert intent, he would mock at the story and ridicule the Lord himself. More harm would seep into the moral, emotional and ethical fabric of the society and cause excessive damage spiritually if the story of Lord Ram, which is otherwise holy, divine and spiritually uplifting, is told to those who are ineligible to hear it than to keep it untold.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 128 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it where Lord Shiva has told his consort Parvati that he has told her the story as she was sincere to hear it and had faith in him (Shiva) that he would tell her the truth. Lord Shiva has also outlined the qualities of a person who is eligible to hear this divine story, and the character of those who are not.]

सुनहु राम कर सहज सुभाऊ । जन अभिमान न राखहिं काऊ ॥ ५ ॥
संसृत मूल सूलप्रद नाना । सकल सोक दायक अभिमाना ॥ ६ ॥

sunahu rāma kara sahaja subhā'ū. jana abhimāna na rākhahim kā'ū. 5.
sansṛta mūla sūlaprada nānā. sakala sōka dāyaka abhimānā. 6.

Listen to the innate habit and natural disposition of Lord Ram: he never tolerates the negative trait of 'Abhimaan' (pride, ego and haughtiness) in his followers and subordinates (i.e. his devotees). (5)

The reason is that 'Abhiman' is at the root of one getting entangled in the gross mortal world of transmigration, and this negative traits causes immense and interminable suffering, grief, misery and pain to a creature. (6)

ताते करहिं कृपानिधि दूरी । सेवक पर ममता अति भूरी ॥ ७ ॥
जिमि सिसु तन बन होइ गोसाईं । मातु चिराव कठिन की नाई ॥ ८ ॥

tātē karahim kṛpānidhi dūri. sēvaka para mamatā ati bhūrī. 7.
jimi sisu tana brana hō'i gōsā'īm. mātu cirāva kaṭhina kī nā'īm. 8.

This is the reason the most merciful Lord removes this negative trait from his devotees and followers (“sēvaka”) immediately as the Lord has exceptional affection for them and would do everything to protect them from any harm¹. (7)

Oh respected Lord (“gōsā'īm”—i.e. Garud)! It is just like the case of a child developing a sore boil on his body when his loving mother would get it operated and removed inspite of this procedure causing a lot of transient pain to the child². (8)

[Note—¹To wit, the merciful Lord nips the trouble in the bud by taking necessary steps to eradicate this negativity from his devotee. Though at first it may cause a lot of heartburn in the afflicted person, but like a good doctor the Lord prefers this than to let his devotee suffer an irreparable damage and a lot of torment in the long run.

The celestial sage Narad too had once developed ‘Abhimaan’ in him. The occasion was Narad wishing to marry a pretty girl inspite of being an exalted sage and one who had vowed to renounce all attractions for sensual pleasures. Lord Vishnu tried to warn him from falling prey to this trap by indicating to him about his excellent virtues for which Narad was so dear to the Lord and was revered by the whole world. So the Lord praised him for his excellent virtues of renunciation, possession of knowledge, self-control over his senses and devotion for the Lord amongst others so as to hint to Narad to be careful. But since Narad was overcome by passion, he did not understand the hidden meaning of the Lord’s praise, but rather became very proud that the Supreme Lord has praised him. The Lord did not like it, and to ensure Narad remains free from this, he manoeuvred things in such a way that Narad could not marry. This entire story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 124—to 139.

But more specifically to our topic, refer to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-6 that precede Doha no. 129 where Lord Vishnu has thought to himself that he needs to remove ‘Abhimaan’ from the mind and heart of Narad.

As far as delusions and getting distracted by them being the cause of countless sorrows, miseries, grief and pain is concerned, refer to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 121 along with Chaupai line nos. 28-37 that precede it.

²This is explained further in the following Doha no. 74. The mother holds her breath and pays no attention to the child’s yelling and throwing fits while the doctor removes the boil, but she knows that it is for the long-term good for her beloved infant. The momentary stern behaviour of the mother while she hold the child as he kicks and yells in pain while the boil is being attended to by the doctor does not mean that she is merciless or wishes the child to suffer, but she has the future of the child in mind. Likewise, the merciful Lord Ram too pays no attention to the momentary agitation that his devotee undergoes while the Lord creates a condition whereby his negative traits are destroyed. It often happens that in the process it is the Lord who himself has to suffer and take the blame, as it happened in the case of Narad who had cursed Lord

Vishnu when the latter did not allow him to fall in the trap of temptations caused by libido, passion and lust when Narad wanted to marry a girl as narrated in the verses cited in note no. 1 herein above. The Lord took the curse cheerfully and in his stride, and he did not become angry on Narad, just like the mother who smilingly copes with the tantrums thrown by the child, his kicking and biting and yelling as she holds him tightly while the surgeon treats the boil.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-6 that precede Doha no. 43 where Lord Ram has told Narad precisely this thing—that he treats his devotees like a mother treats her infant child, and therefore it is his responsibility to take proper care of them and see to it that their happiness is not compromised.]

दो०. जदपि प्रथम दुख पावइ रोवइ बाल अधीर ।

ब्याधि नास हित जननी गनति न सो सिसु पीर ॥ ७४ (क) ॥

dōhā.

jadapi prathama dukha pāva'i rōva'i bāla adhīra.

byādhi nāsa hita jananī ganati na sō sisu pīra. 74 (a).

Though the child suffers immense pain and becomes very agitated in the beginning due to his ailment, the kind and loving mother does not pay any heed to it because it is for the child's own good that his disease is cured. (Doha no. 74-a).

तिमि रघुपति निज दास कर हरहिं मान हित लागि ।

तुलसिदास ऐसे प्रभुहि कस न भजहु भ्रम त्यागि ॥ ७४ (ख) ॥

timi raghupati nija dāsa kara harahim māna hita lāgi.

tulasidāsa aisē prabhuhi kasa na bhajahu bhrama tyāgi. 74 (b).

Similarly, Lord Raghunath (Sri Ram) removes the sense of pride and ego from his servants ("nija dāsa"—i.e. his faithful and loving devotees, followers and subordinates who are dependent upon him) because it is for their own good and welfare.

Tulsidas asserts—'Why should one not abandon all kinds of delusions and doubts, and instead adore, worship and have devotion for such a Lord who is so exceptionally kind, gracious, benevolent and merciful that he is so concerned about the good and well-being of his devotees.'¹ (Doha no. 74-b)

[Note—¹To wit, it is in the interest of the devotee himself to have unwavering devotion and faith in such a gracious Lord as Sri Ram who is so worried about the welfare of his devotees that he would not let any negative trait remain in him so that the happiness in the future of the devotee is assured. Say, who would not like to have such a Lord for himself; who would not admire this quality in his Master?

Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 43.]

चौ०. राम कृपा आपनि जड़ताई । कहउँ खगेस सुनहु मन लाई ॥ १ ॥
 जब जब राम मनुज तनु धरहीं । भक्त हेतु लीला बहु करहीं ॥ २ ॥
 तब तब अवधपुरी मैं जाऊँ । बालचरित बिलोकि हरषाऊँ ॥ ३ ॥
 जन्म महोत्सव देखउँ जाई । बरष पाँच तहँ रहउँ लोभाई ॥ ४ ॥

caupāī.

rāma kṛpā āpani jaratāī. kaha'um' khagēsa sunahu mana lāī. 1.
 jaba jaba rāma manuja tanu dharahīm. bhakta hētu līlā bahu karahīm. 2.
 taba taba avadhapurī maim jā'um'. bālacarita bilōki haraṣā'um'. 3.
 janma mahōtsava dēkha'um' jāī. baraṣa pāmca taham' raha'um' lōbhāī. 4.

[Continuing with his discourse, Kaagbhusund told Garud—] Oh the King of Birds (khagēsa)! Now listen attentively to my narration where I would describe Lord Ram's benevolence and grace on the one hand, and my own misdemeanours, travesty, grossness and stupidity on the other hand. (1)

Whenever Lord Ram assumes a human form on earth and plays countless sports (performs many marvellous deeds) for the benefit of his devotees¹, --- (2)

--- On all those auspicious occasions I go to Ayodhya (the city where Lord Ram takes a birth as a human child), and I feel exhilarated in my heart when I observe the Lord's playful activities as a child². (3)

I go there to witness the grand celebrations of the Lord's birth, and then I feel so charmed and fascinated by it that I abide there for around five more years to participate in and enjoy the euphoria that prevails in Ayodhya during that time. (4)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precedes Doha no. 110; Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede Doha no. 114; Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 121; and Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 122 where it is said that there are a variety of reasons why Lord Ram takes a human form and descends on earth.

Like our own world, the cosmos or the universe consists of countless other worlds. Each exists in a different time-space frame, and each has its own tale of the Lord revealing himself on different occasions due to different causes. This mystical and astonishing revelation has been made by Kaagbhusund who had personally roamed in these universes and seen many forms of Lord Ram, the Supreme Being, there in different stages of playing his divine sport. This is clearly narrated in detail in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 80—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 83.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 81; Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 89; and Chaupai line no. 12-14 that precede Doha no. 114.]

इष्टदेव मम बालक रामा । सोभा बपुष कोटि सत कामा ॥ ५ ॥

निज प्रभु बदन निहारि निहारी । लोचन सुफल करउँ उरगारी ॥ ६ ॥
लघु बायस बपु धरि हरि संगी । देखउँ बालचरित बहु रंगा ॥ ७ ॥

iṣṭadēva mama bālaka rāmā. sōbhā bapuṣa kōṭi sata kāmā. 5.
nija prabhu badana nihāri nihārī. lōcana suphala kara'um' uragārī. 6.
laghu bāyasa bapu dhari hari saṅgā. dēkha'um' bālacarita bahu raṅgā. 7.

The form of the Lord as a child is my favourite deity I am very much fond of. This form is extremely beautiful and charming so much so that it is equivalent to the bewitching attraction of millions of Kaamdeos (Cupid; the patron God of bewitching beauty and charm) who appear to have spread their combined magic on the Lord's form¹. (5)

Oh the enemy of serpents (i.e. Garud—"uragārī")! I fill my eyes to my heart's content with the beauteous and divine sight of my Lord, and this allows my eyes to feel contented and fulfilled by this experience; they get the reward of their existence². (6)

I assume a diminutive form of a humble little and harmless crow, and roam around free with the Lord in close proximity with him. This enables me to fulfil my dream of watching the many sports of the Lord from close quarters³. (7)

[Note—¹Kaagbhusund's Guru, moral guide and preceptor, had advised him to meditate upon the beauteous form of Lord Ram as a child while giving him 'Diskha and Mantra', i.e. at the time of his formal initiation. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 113.

²A similar idea is expressed in the case of the demon Marich who was forced by Ravana to assume the form of a golden deer so that Sita can be abducted. At that time also Marich had felt very fortunate that he would be able to glance at the lovely form of Lord Ram who would be chasing him from behind in order to shoot him and make him captive. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 26 along with Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes it.

Similarly, sage Sutikshan too felt exulted and euphoric that he would be able to fill his eyes with the divine sight of Lord Ram when he came to know that the Lord was heading his way in the forest. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 9-10 that precede it Doha no. 10.

³As a crow, no one can stop me from entering the place where Lord Ram plays in the courtyard. I hop and jump around the place at my liberty. This ploy of mine serves my purpose best as it does not arouse any suspicion in anyone's mind about my real identity and intent. I am allowed free access to the Lord, and the all-knowing Lord knows who I am and why I am there, so he freely obliges me by merrily playing with me, running around the place chasing me and pricking my ears and body! Say, how fortunate I am indeed.]

दो०. लरिकाई जहँ जहँ फिरहिं तहँ तहँ संग उड़ाउँ ।

जूठनि परइ अजिर महँ सो उठाइ करि खाउँ ॥ ७५ (क) ॥

dōhā.

larikā'īm jaham' jaham' phirahim taham' taham' saṅga urā'um.
jūṭhani para'i ajira maham' sō uṭhā'i kari khā'um. 75 (a).

Wherever Lord Ram goes around as a child, I accompany him everywhere by flying alongside. When he eats something and discards the leftovers, I pounce upon it and eat it myself. [This becomes a 'Prasad' or sanctified food for me, and to add glory to such food it is offered to me by my deity himself. So I pounce upon it immediately and gobble it down so that I don't miss the golden opportunity of partaking of such a holy food.] (Doha no. 75-a)

एक बार अतिसय सब चरित किए रघुबीर ।

सुमिरत प्रभु लीला सोइ पुलकित भयउ सरीर ॥ ७५ (ख) ॥

ēka bāra atisaya saba carita ki'ē raghubīra.

sumirata prabhu līlā sō'i pulakita bhaya'u sarīra. 75 (b).

It so happened once that Lord Raghubir (Sri Ram, the brave Lord of the Raghu's line of Kings) performed some stupendous deeds that were so esoteric and mystical that by merely remembering them Kaagbhusund felt exhilarated and his body became thrilled. (Doha no. 75-b)

चौ०. कहइ भसुंड सुनहु खगनायक । रामचरित सेवक सुखदायक ॥ १ ॥

नृपमंदिर सुंदर सब भाँती । खचित कनक मनि नाना जाती ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

kaha'i bhasuṇḍa sunahu khaganāyaka. rāmacarita sēvaka sukhadāyaka. 1.
nr̥pamandira sundara saba bhāmṭī. khacita kanaka mani nānā jāṭī. 2.

[Kaagbhusund now describes the beauteous form of the child Ram as he had seen it when he stayed in the palace with Lord Ram during the Lord's childhood days at Ayodhya. He told Garud—]

'Listen oh the Chief of Birds (sunahu khaganāyaka)! The divine and holy story of Lord Ram gives delight, joy and happiness to his followers, supporters, subordinates and devotees¹. (1)

The palace of the King (Dasrath, the king of Ayodhya, in whose household Lord Vishnu had manifested in the form of a Lord Ram) was wonderful and charming by all means. It was a golden palace with priceless gems studded on its walls². (2)

[Note—¹The word used in the text is "sēvaka"—which literally means one who serves. There are many categories of people who can serve the Lord—e.g. a servant, a subordinate, a follower, or a devotee of the Lord. The word does not actually refer to

a servant or a subordinate in the sense these words are used in day-to-day life—i.e. a person who is employed by someone on a fixed salary to attend to his household chores and do domestic duties; or a person employed by the government or the king to attend to official duties. In the spiritual context the word ‘*sēvaka*’ would mean someone who is faithful and loyal to the Lord God, who follows the spiritual principles of life and Dharma as laid down by the Lord, who is devoted to the Lord and serves the cause of the Lord selflessly and to the best of his ability, expecting only the blessing, grace and mercy of the Lord, and having no desire for gaining any kind of pecuniary or any other kind of worldly benefit by this service done to the Lord.

²The description that appears here, that of the wonderful beauty of Lord Ram as a child as experienced by Kaagbhusund, is quite similar to the days of the Lord’s childhood and adolescence, about his fascinating pastimes when he played many pranks and acted mischievously like an ordinary boy much to the amusement and fascination of his mother Kaushalya and father Dasrath, as well as of the magical charm he had spread over the entire city of Ayodhya and mesmerised its citizens, giving them the joy and happiness of their lives, has also been described in detail earlier in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 198—to Doha no. 199; and from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 200—to Doha no. 205.]

बरनि न जाइ रुचिर अँगनाई । जहँ खेलहिं नित चारिउ भाई ॥ ३ ॥
बालबिनोद करत रघुराई । बिचरत अजिर जननि सुखदाई ॥ ४ ॥

barani na jā'i rucira aṅganā'ī. jaham' khēlahim nita cāri'u bhā'ī. 3.
bālabinōda karata raghurā'ī. bicarata ajira janani sukhadā'ī. 4.

It is difficult for me to describe the beauty and the magnificence of the courtyard of the palace where the four divine brothers¹ played everyday. (3)

The Lord of the Raghus (“*raghurā'ī*”—i.e. Lord Ram) frolicked in this courtyard as he moved around in it, performing many childish pranks and engaged in many pastimes much to the amusement of his mother (Kaushalya). (4)

[Note—¹The ‘four brothers’ are Lord Ram, who was the eldest, and his three younger siblings Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan.]

मरकत मृदुल कलेवर स्यामा । अंग अंग प्रति छबि बहु कामा ॥ ५ ॥
नव राजीव अरुन मृदु चरना । पदज रुचिर नख ससि दुति हरना ॥ ६ ॥

marakata mṛdula kalēvara syāmā. aṅga aṅga prati chabi bahu kāmā. 5.
nava rājīva aruna mṛdu caranā. padaja rucira nakha sasi duti haranā. 6.

The Lord’s tender body had a dark complexion with a green tinge that resembled an emerald. It appeared as if each part of the Lord’s body, each of his organs, reflected

the composite charm and beauty of countless Kaamdeos (the patron god of beauty, charm and physical attraction; cupid). (5)

His feet were soft, and they looked like a fresh lotus flower that has a light red hue in it. Similarly, the fingers were also extremely well-shaped and attractive, and had nails that outshined the brilliance of the full moon. (6)

ललित अंक कुलिसादिक चारी । नूपुर चारु मधुर रवकारी ॥ ७ ॥
चारु पुरट मनि रचित बनाई । कटि किंकिनि कल मुखर सुहाई ॥ ८ ॥

lalita aṅka kulisādika cārī. nūpura cāru madhura ravakārī. 7.
cāru puraṭa mani racita banāī. kaṭi kiṅkini kala mukhara suhāī. 8.

On the sole of the Lord's feet there were holy marks such as that of the 'Vajra' ("kulisādika"—i.e. the thunderbolt, the goad, the flag and the lotus; these signs are present on the sole of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being).

Lovely anklets adorned the feet of the Lord, and from them emanated a sweet sound as the Lord moved. (7)

The golden waist-band that he wore had priceless gems and jewels studded on it, and it produced a very pleasant tinkling sound (from the tiny bells hanging from it). (8)

दो०. रेखा त्रय सुंदर उदर नाभी रुचिर गंभीर ।
उर आयत भ्राजत बिबिधि बाल बिभूषन चीर ॥ ७६ ॥
dōhā.

rēkhā traya sundara udara nābhī rucira gaṁbhīra.
ura āyata bhrājata bibidhi bāla bibhūṣana cīra. 76.

There were three pretty folds of skin on his abdomen with a lovely navel that was made attractive by its depth.

Countless ornaments and clothes befitting a child adorned his large and well-built chest. (Doha no. 76)

चौ०. अरुन पानि नख करज मनोहर । बाहु बिसाल बिभूषन सुंदर ॥ १ ॥
कंध बाल केहरि दर ग्रीवा । चारु चिबुक आनन छबि सीवा ॥ २ ॥
caupāī.

aruna pāni nakha karaja manōhara. bāhu bisāla bibhūṣana sundara. 1.
kandha bāla kēhari dara grīvā. cāru cibuka ānana chabi sīvā. 2.

Red lotus like palms of the hands with the fingers and their nails were so lovely to look at that they literally stole the beholder's mind and heart. His long arms were

adorned by beautiful ornaments. [To wit, the person who looked at the Lord's hands was mesmerised by their beauty and charm.] (1)

His shoulders were muscular and well-built like those of a lion's cub. His neck was smooth and rounded, shaped like a conch. His chin too was pretty, and of course his face was an epitome of beauty in its perfection. (2)

कलबल बचन अधर अरुनारे । दुइ दुइ दसन बिसद बर बारे ॥ ३ ॥

ललित कपोल मनोहर नासा । सकल सुखद ससि कर सम हासा ॥ ४ ॥

kalabala bacana adhara arunārē. du'i du'i dasana bisada bara bārē. 3.

lalita kapōla manōhara nāsā. sakala sukhada sasi kara sama hāsā. 4.

His (child Ram's) speech was yet indistinct as he talked with a lisp in it. His lips were red in colour. Inside the lips (i.e. in the Lord's mouth) there were two rows of small teeth that were glittering white. (3)

His cheeks were pretty; his nose was lovely; and his smile was so bewitchingly sweet and pleasant that it resembled the soothing rays of the full moon's light that gives delight and exhilaration to one's heart and mind. (4)

नील कंज लोचन भव मोचन । भ्राजत भाल तिलक गोरोचन ॥ ५ ॥

बिकट भृकुटि सम श्रवन सुहाए । कुंचित कच मेचक छबि छाए ॥ ६ ॥

nīla kanja lōcana bhava mōcana. bhrājata bhāla tilaka gōrōcana. 5.

bikaṭa bhr̥kuṭi sama śravana suhā'ē. kuñcita kaca mēcaka chabi chā'ē. 6.

The eyes (of child Ram) were like a blue lotus flower; their glance frees a creature from the bondage of birth and death in this gross mortal world (i.e. they free the creature from the cycle of transmigration; the Lord's merciful glance provides the fortunate one with the fruit of liberation and deliverance from this world).

A sacred Tilak mark made by a yellow pigment called 'GoroChan'¹ adorns his forehead. (5)

His eyebrows are arched, and his ears are well proportioned and contoured. The beauty of dark curly hair that adorns his head and dangle over his ears and forehead add to the fascinating and bewitching charm of the Lord's face. (6)

[Note—¹The 'Tilak' is worn by Hindus as a sacred sign marked on their forehead. It acquires different forms. Followers of Lord Vishnu make 2 vertical lines, usually in the form of a tuning fork with a dot in the center of the upright lines, while those of Lord Shiva have 2 horizontal lines with a dot in the middle. This 'dot' represents 'Shakti' or the cosmic power of the Lord.

The 'GoroChan' is a yellow coloured pigment secreted in the bile of a cow and is collected when the cow vomits. It is mixed with cow-dung, cow's urine and other

herbs, and made into a sticky paste that is applied on the forehead as a religious symbol called a Tilak.]

पीत झीनि झगुली तन सोही । किलकनि चितवनि भावति मोही ॥ ७ ॥
रूप रासि नृप अजिर बिहारी । नाचहिं निज प्रतिबिंब निहारी ॥ ८ ॥

pīta jhīni jhagulī tana sōhī. kilakani citavani bhāvati mōhī. 7.
rūpa rāsi nrpa ajira bihārī. nācahiṃ nija pratibimba nihārī. 8.

A yellow coloured frock made of soft and light fabric (silk or cotton) adorned the Lord's body. I was held in thrall and was greatly charmed and enthused by his shrill cry of joy and glances thrown at me. (7)

The Lord was a treasury of exceptional beauty, charm and wonder as he played and moved around in the palace courtyard of king Dasrath. When he saw his own image or shadow, he was so fascinated by this wonderful sight that he began to dance in merry abandon. (8)

मोहि सन करहिं बिबिधि बिधि क्रीड़ा । बरनत मोहि होति अति ब्रीड़ा ॥ ९ ॥
किलकत मोहि धरन जब धावहिं । चलउँ भागि तब पूष देखावहिं ॥ १० ॥

mōhi sana karahiṃ bibidhi bidhi krīḍā. baranata mōhi hōti ati brīḍā. 9.
kilakata mōhi dharana jaba dhāvahiṃ. cala'um' bhāgi taba pūpa dēkhāvahiṃ. 10.

All the while, as soon as he spotted me hopping around, he would play with me in various ways. Verily indeed, it was such a mystical experience that now I feel shy to narrate them; I blush at the very thought of those exhilarating moments that sent goose bumps through my body. (9)

Making a shrill cry of excitement to show his pleasure, when the Lord dashed at me in order to catch hold of me, I used to run away. So the Lord would tempt me to come nearer by holding some sweet in his hands and proffering it to me¹. [Such moments were so entertaining and thrilling, as well as emotionally and spiritually fulfilling that I feel goose bumps when I remember them even now.] (10)

[Note—¹Similar incidents with a little difference were experienced by mother Kaushalya as described in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-7 that precede Doha no. 203. Here, when his father king Dasrath called the child Ram to come near him to share some sweet with him, the Lord ran away, tottering and falling and picking himself again. Mother Kaushalya would run behind the child, and the latter would give a shrill cry and run faster ahead to escape being caught by his mother!]

दो०. आवत निकट हँसहिं प्रभु भाजत रुदन कराहिं ।
जाउँ समीप गहन पद फिरि फिरि चितइ पराहिं ॥ ७७ (क) ॥

dōhā.

āvata nikāṭa haṁṣahiṁ prabhu bhājata rudana karāhiṁ.
jā'um̐ samīpa gahana pada phiri phiri cita'i parāhiṁ. 77 (a).

When I came near the Lord he began to laugh; and when I ran away from him he started crying!

When I approached him to touch his holy feet, he would run away from me but kept glancing back at me as he did so. [In all sooth and without gainsay, it is really such a fascinating and wonderful sight to imagine: the Lord and Kaagbhusund playing hide-and-seek with each other!! Indeed, how fortunate was Kaagbhusund.] (Doha no. 77-a)

प्राकृत सिसु इव लीला देखि भयउ मोहि मोह ।
कवन चरित्र करत प्रभु चिदानंद संदोह ॥ ७७ (ख) ॥

prākṛta sisu iva līlā dēkhi bhaya'u mōhi mōha.
kavana caritra karata prabhu cidānanda sandōha. 77 (b).

When I observed this play of the Lord which was done like an ordinary human child, I was confused and overcome with doubts.

I wondered about the way the Lord is behaving: He being the Supreme Lord of the World, one who is pure Cosmic Consciousness and an embodiment of true Knowledge and Bliss, why would he play like an ordinary child and derive so much pleasure from such worldly activities?¹ (Doha no. 77-b)

[Note—¹Kaagbhusund is building a ground to explain to Garud the complexities and paradoxes associated with the 'truth' of Lord Ram. There are so many things that look different from what they actually are.

Garud was confused and filled with doubt about the divine nature of Lord Ram when he had seen the Lord tied up by snakes in the battle-field of Lanka just like Kaagbhusund got perplexed and utterly bewildered by seeing Lord Ram acting like an ordinary human child. In the narrative that follows herein below, we would read that when Lord Ram saw the confused face of Kaagbhusund, the Lord showed him his cosmic form, the vast and all-encompassing form that harboured all the universes within its self. Kaagbhusund actually flew around some of them, and was awe-struck with what he saw. This convinced him that the child he was playing with was no ordinary one, but the Supreme Being himself.]

चौ०. एतना मन आनत खगराया । रघुपति प्रेरित व्यापी माया ॥ १ ॥
सो माया न दुखद मोहि काहीं । आन जीव इव संसृत नाही ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

ētanā mana ānata khagarāyā. raghupati prērita byāpī māyā. 1.
sō māyā na dukhada mōhi kāhīm. āna jīva iva sansṛta nāhīm. 2.

Oh the King of Birds (“khagarāyā”—i.e. Garud)! The moment I allowed doubt to enter my mind, the Lord’s delusive power called ‘Maya’, being directed by the Lord of the Raghus (i.e. by Lord Ram), took control over me (or came to possess me). (1)

But this Maya did not become a cause for worries, troubles or sorrows for me, and neither did it throw me into the whirlpool of birth and death so typical of other living beings in this world who come under the spell of Maya¹. (2)

[Note—¹Usually Maya creates a horde of problems for a creature. For instance, when Narad had been overcome by Maya, he became so much deluded that he developed infatuation for a pretty girl and determined to marry her at all costs, forgetting that he was a sage and had taken a vow of renunciation and detachment, and was supposed to be free from sensual attractions. The horrible effect of Maya was so intense that when Narad could not marry that maiden of his choice, he had cursed his own beloved Lord Vishnu because he felt that the Lord had prevented him from marrying her. This story is narrated in detail in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 124—to Doha no. 139.

So Kaagbhusund is quick to clarify that in his case, though the Maya was ordered by Lord Ram to come and cast its shadow over him, it was not to cause any sort of trouble to him, but was an excuse by which the Lord would show him some great sight that he had not hitherto shown to anyone else. In this sense the shadow of Maya was a blessing in disguise for Kaagbhusund. This was to be expected—because Lord Ram had been playing with Kaagbhusund fondly a while ago, and being immensely merciful and kind the Lord just couldn’t throw his dear friend and playmate into the pit of hell by tying him down by the snare of delusions. After all, the Lord is the one who frees a creature from the troubles created by Maya, so how can he put his dear devotee Kaagbhusund into a new kind of trouble?

Maya or delusions and Bhakti or devotion, both have been classified as being maids of Lord Ram. But the Lord is favourable towards Bhakti because it represents noble and virtuous qualities in a creature that uplift his soul, whereas Maya is simply like a dancing girl as it represents worldly taints and evil qualities that are spiritually demeaning for the creature. So if a creature has the virtue of Bhakti for the Lord in him, Maya is sore affright to disturb such a creature because it would offend the Lord as he prefers Bhakti over Maya.

Bhakti and Maya are treated as ‘females or maids’. This is because their ‘Lord’ here is Sri Ram, a manifested human ‘male’ form of the Supreme Being who was also a ‘King’ of Ayodhya. The Upanishads and other Vedic texts call the Supreme Being as the ‘Viraat Purush’, the Cosmic Male. Another word used as a synonym for the Supreme Being is ‘Brahm’, but Brahm represents the very basis of creation, i.e. the Cosmic Consciousness that has no gender. When this Cosmic Consciousness started the process of creation, there evolved, in a step-by-step manner and in an increasingly grosser form, a cosmic Male and a cosmic Female to give shape to and help in self-propagation of the forthcoming creation, and to maintain its self-perpetuating forward movement in the form of a never ending cycle of creation and destruction. The primary form of the Cosmic Male was known as the ‘Viraat Purush’ (“Male”) and the primary form of the Cosmic Female was known as the

‘Shakti’ (the Male’s authority, powers, dynamism and energy to act and do something).

As in all cases where ‘Shakti’ is involved, it can turn out to be either ‘bad’ or ‘good’. If it is ‘good’ then this Shakti is loved by the Lord; if it turns out to be ‘bad’, it is disliked by the Lord. This is what happens in practice with Bhakti and Maya respectively. Whereas the Lord favours Bhakti, he abhors Maya, though both are under his domain and command.

Remember: These are symbolic ways of explaining complicated metaphysical principles which basically mean that if a living being has the good virtue of devotion and faith for the Lord God inside him, the negative traits associated with delusions would not darken his inner-self.

In this context, refer to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 43—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 45; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 46; and (iii) Doha no. 116 along with Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precede it.]

नाथ इहाँ कछु कारन आना । सुनहु सो सावधान हरिजाना ॥ ३ ॥

ग्यान अखंड एक सीताबर । माया बस्य जीव सचराचर ॥ ४ ॥

nātha ihām̐ kachu kārana ānā. sunahu sō sāvadhāna harijānā. 3.
gyāna akhaṇḍa ēka sītābara. māyā basya jīva sacarācara. 4.

Oh Lord (“nātha”—Garud), there was a different reason why the Lord ordered Maya to cast its spell on me. Oh the devotee of Lord Hari (“harijānā”—i.e. Garud, who was a mount of Lord Hari who is also known by the name of Lord Vishnu), I shall describe it to you; listen carefully¹. (3)

It is Lord Ram, the beloved husband of Sita (sītābara)², who alone is an eternal fount of absolute and truthful knowledge, the Lord who is an embodiment of perfect knowledge (i.e. the Lord is free from the clutches of ‘delusions’ as ‘knowledge and delusions’ can’t co-exist), while the rest of creatures in this world, both the animate as well the inanimate, are subject to the influences of Maya (delusions)³. (4)

[Note—¹The choice of the word “harijānā” to address Garud is excellent here. The word means ‘one who knows Lord Hari’, or ‘Understand the truth of Lord Hari by properly paying attention to what I am going to narrate now’. Kaagbhusund wished to remove any sort of doubt in the mind of Garud at the very beginning of the narration itself because he was apprehensive that Garud might be alarmed when told that ‘Maya overcame Kaagbhusund on the instructions of Lord Ram’. He may wonder ‘How come this happened?’

So, the wise sage Kaagbhusund uses the word “harijānā” to tell Garud that he would be well-advised to listen to some of the maverick plays of the Lord and how these are for the good of the Lord’s devotees, instead of being detrimental for their well-being.

²Again there is a wise choice of a word while referring to Lord Ram. Kaagbhusund uses the word “sītābara”—meaning the husband of Sita. On the face of it Lord Ram appears to be like ordinary human beings who take birth and marry someone, in this

case Ram marrying Sita. So, is he an ordinary man, or is he the Supreme Being? This is the very question that had vexed Garud, and so Kaagbhusund directly addresses the root of the problem by invoking that form of the Lord who marries a woman known as Sita who gets kidnapped by some vile villain in the forest, and her husband, Sri Ram, goes searching for her, discovers her in the captivity of some demon by the name of Ravana, launches a campaign to free her, and gets embroiled in a ferocious war at Lanka where he gets tied in a snare of serpents from which he couldn't free himself and needed the help of Garud to set him free. As we must recall, this was the primary cause of perplexity for Garud: how can such a person be the Supreme Being?

Hence, Kaagbhusund catches the bull by the horn by calling Lord Ram the 'husband of Sita' to directly answer Garud's question about the truth and reality of the Lord.

³Therefore in this Chaupai line no. 4, Kaagbhusund answers this vexed question that had been tormenting Garud for so long by saying that the same person who is the 'husband of Sita' is the 'Lord of perfect knowledge'.

To wit, this eclectic quality of having perfect and absolute knowledge distinguishes Lord Ram from the rest of the living beings in this world.

A similar idea is expressed elsewhere in Ram Charit Manas. Refer: (i) Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 200; and (ii) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precedes Doha no. 117.

In Uttar Kand, Chanda line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 13, the Vedas have said a similar thing when they appeared to offer prayers to Lord Ram at the time of his coronation. The Vedas asserted that the Lord's Maya is so huge, invincible and intractable that it has stolen or overshadowed the wisdom and intellect of all the Gods, the Demons, the Nagas, the Human beings, and the rest of the animate as well as the inanimate world.]

जौं सब कें रह ग्यान एकरस । ईस्वर जीवहि भेद कहहु कस ॥ ५ ॥

माया बस्य जीव अभिमानी । ईस बस्य माया गुनखानी ॥ ६ ॥

jauṁ saba kēm raha gyāna ēkarasa. īsvara jīvahi bhēda kahahu kasa. 5.
māyā basya jīva abhimānī. īsa basya māyā gunakhānī. 6.

Say, if all the living beings or the creatures (jīva) have perfect and absolute knowledge, then what would be the difference them and the Lord God (īsvara)¹?

[To wit, the distinguishing factor between the Lord and the rest of the creation is the quality of perfect, truthful and absolute knowledge that the Lord possesses and others don't have.] (5)

The Jiva (living being) is under the influence of Maya which makes them proud, egoistic and haughty (abhimānī). The Maya, which has the three basic qualities called 'Gunas' that determine all characters and behaviours of the creatures in this world (māyā gunakhānī)², itself is under the control of the Lord God (īsa). (6)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Doha no. 14—to Doha no. 16 where Laxman has asked a similar question regarding the difference between a Jiva

and Ishwara. Lord Ram has explained to him in detail on the same lines as Kaagbhusund outlines here.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 130 also.

According to the Upanishads, there are three basic qualities in all living beings that determine their thoughts, behaviour, attitude, actions and character. They are called Sata Guna, Raja Guna and Tama Guna. Maya has all these three Gunas as its basic ingredient.

Since all the creatures have these three Gunas in varying proportions, they are all said to be under the influence of Maya in varying degrees. It is only Lord Ram who is neutral to them; the three Gunas cancel each other in Lord Ram, and therefore he is above Maya. This is what marks the difference between the Lord and other living beings.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 130 where a similar idea is expressed.

Now, let us see briefly what these three Gunas are:-

(a) The *Sata Guna* is the best of the three qualities present in any creature. It is a positive quality and is marked by a propensity for following the path of nobility, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, virtuousness, holiness and righteousness. Creatures that have a predominance of Sata Guna are inclined to do selfless service, be benevolent, merciful, kind and gracious, have coolness of head and a rationale and balanced mind, be contented, have humility and piety etc. Such creatures are devoted to good values in life and have a desire to acquire knowledge that would help them reach higher spiritual goals in life.

This Sata Guna is marked by high standards of ethical and moral existence that makes the bearer of such qualities highly respected in society. Such people have a spiritual dimension to their personality. This quality is spiritually uplifting and gives a divine halo to those who possess it and practice it.

The Vasanas that have the Sata Guna or quality dominant in them are like a veil covering the lamp or like a smoke covering the fire. A slight breeze will remove this smoke. Similarly a little bit of prayer and meditation will remove the Satwic desires; its removal requires the least effort.

(b) The second quality is the *Raja Guna* and it makes a man more attracted to this material world and its charms, and less spiritually inclined. The Raja Guna is the medium quality marked by a greater percentage of worldly passions, desires and attachments and their natural offshoots in a creature. It makes a creature inclined towards the material things of the gross world and their enjoyments, towards creation of wealth, its enhancement and protection, and generally having a desire for growth, development and expansion etc. It covers such qualities as worldly yearnings, passions, a stormy nature, agitated behaviour, ambitions, selfishness, expansionist tendencies, a desire to acquire, retain and develop such acquisitions even to the detriment of one's long term spiritual welfare and even if such actions cause pain to others. All these pertain to this materialistic world. Such qualities give worldly fame and prosperity. If these qualities are judiciously mixed with the Satwic qualities, then they provide the person the better of the two worlds, both in terms of worldly fame as well as spiritual well being.

The Vasanas that have the Rajsic Guna or quality dominant in them can be compared to dust on a mirror. In this case some dusting and rubbing is needed to

clean the mirror; a greater effort is needed as compared to the case with Satwic quality.

(c) The third quality is called the *Tama Guna* and is the meanest and the basest of the three Gunas. It is a demeaning quality in a creature that leads to his downfall and perpetual entanglement with things that are considered improper and unethical. It creates an inclination for committing all sorts of sins, misdeeds and demeanours. It leads the creature towards negativity and inspires him to acquire negative qualities such as various vices, evils, sins, perversions etc. It makes him inclined to be greedy, rapacious, haughty, arrogant, lustful, intoxicated, vile and wild to the extreme. Such a creature with a predominance of Tama Guna has utter disregard for propriety, noble virtues and ethics, for righteousness and morality.

In brief, it is the most degrading, denigrating and contemptible of the three characteristics in a person, and leads to such behaviour which is utterly immoral, denigrating and depraved, marked by grossness, crassness and recklessness. It therefore leads to his downfall, ignominy and ruin as well as ignorance, delusions, gloom, inertia, anger, frustration etc.

The Tamsic Guna or quality is like the embryonic membrane that covers the foetus in the womb. They cannot be removed easily and require great diligence, effort, persistence, dedication and careful handling requiring time and patience. It is the basest and the lowliest of the three characteristics, and the worst type to possess.

The Vasanas that have the Tama Guna in dominance are regarded as the ‘bad Vasanas’ or better still the ‘worst type of Vasana’ that any individual can have.

These Gunas, in varying ratios and mixtures, decide the character and personality of any given unit of creation. In modern world we recognize them as the ‘gene’ special to that individual, the ‘gene’ which makes each individual so unique in this creation. These Gunas can also be compared to the various shades and hues of colours that a painter uses to paint a picture or a portrait and inject life and uniqueness to it. Even the same painter cannot duplicate exactly a picture again—there is bound to be a difference between any two pictures or portraits no matter how invisible, imperceptible, microscopic and subtle it might be.]

परबस जीव स्वबस भगवंता । जीव अनेक एक श्रीकंता ॥ ७ ॥

मुधा भेद जद्यपि कृत माया । बिनु हरि जाइ न कोटि उपाया ॥ ८ ॥

parabasa jīva svabasa bhagavantā. jīva anēka ēka śrīkantā. 7.

mudhā bhēda jadyapi kṛta māyā. binu hari jā'i na kōṭi upāyā. 8.

In the context of what has been said herein before, the Jiva (creature) is dependent on the Gunas, and hence is at the mercy of Maya, while the Lord God (*bhagavantā*) is free from such dependence¹.

Further, there are countless Jivas (i.e. there are countless forms of living beings in this creation), whereas the beloved Lord of Laxmi (“*śrīkantā*”—a reference to Lord Vishnu who is the Supreme Being and who had manifested himself in the form of Lord Ram) is one, immutable and indivisible. (7)

Though this difference (between the individual living being and the Supreme Being) that Maya has artificially created is not real², but this misconception cannot be erased without the grace of Lord Hari upon the creature³. (8)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 11 where Lord Shiva tells Parvati that all living beings are made to dance to the tune or wishes of Lord Ram. And how does the Lord does this? Well, he uses his Maya for this.

Other instances in Ram Charit Manas where it is said that the puppeteer is Lord Ram himself, while the rest of the world is like a puppet are the following: (i) Baal Kand, Doha no. 124; (ii) Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 263; (iii) Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 15; (iv) Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 24 that precedes Doha no. 7; (v) Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 117.

²According to the metaphysical philosophy of the Upanishads, the true identity of a living being is his or her 'Atma' or soul. This Atma is pure consciousness that is known as the 'true self' of the concerned individual. Further, this individual Atma is an image of the cosmic Atma known as the 'Parmatma', the Supreme Atma. The latter is therefore the Cosmic Consciousness. The Atma is an invisible, eternal, sublime and subtle entity as opposed to the physical body of the creature which is visible, gross and mortal.

So therefore, there is no primary difference between the 'true self' of the individual creature, i.e. his Atma, and the Lord God who represents the Supreme Atma. This phenomenon can be easily understood by a simple example. The water of the ocean taken in a cup would be the same as the water present in the main body of the ocean itself. There is no primary difference between the two, but for a person with a low intellect there does exist a difference. For instance, he would argue that the water in the cup can be measured while that in the ocean cannot be.

³Just like a person who happens to be lucky enough to have studied in a college under the guidance of a teacher of science who would explain to him that there is no basic difference between the water in the cup and that in the ocean as both have the same chemical formula of H₂O, those creatures on whom Lord Ram becomes graceful and benevolent in the sense that they become enlightened and self-realised learn that there is no distinction between their own Atma and the Parmatma that the Lord represents.

To wit, such self-realised persons become 'one with the Lord'; all distinctions and differences are erased. And this implies that Maya could not influence them.]

दो०. रामचंद्र के भजन बिनु जो चह पद निर्बान ।

ग्यानवंत अपि सो नर पसु बिनु पूँछ बिषान ॥ ७८ (क) ॥

dōhā.

rāmacandra kē bhajana binu jō caha pada nirbāna.

gyānavanta api sō nara pasu binu pūṁcha biṣāna. 78 (a).

If a person wants to attain the highest state of transcendental existence that is equivalent to having liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation without doing 'Bhajan'¹ of Lord Ram-Chandra, then surely and without gainsay he deemed to be utterly stupid and extremely ignorant; such a thinking would make him highly

anomalous inspite of the fact that he may be otherwise highly qualified in other fields of knowledge, and may be wise and learned too.

Such a person is like an animal that has no tail or horns. This animal becomes a subject of great mockery, ridicule and derision. Likewise, a person who thinks that he can attain the exalted state of transcendental existence and attain eternal peace without following the path of Bhajan of Lord Ram lives in a fool's paradise². (Doha no. 78-a)

[Note—¹The term used in the text is “Bhajana”. This word has a broad meaning as it incorporates within its ambit such virtues as having devotion, faith, affection, admiration, reverence and love for Lord God. Worshipping the Lord, remembering the Lord, listening to and narrating his divine stories and deeds, selflessly serving the Lord, repeating his holy name and meditating on him, spreading the Lord's words and ideals, teaching others about them and initiating them into the path of the Lord, and all such related deeds and spiritual exercises are different forms of doing Bhajan. Of course, in general terms, ‘devotion for Lord God’ is usually taken to mean doing Bhajan in a broad sense. This is because devotion itself has many varieties and connotations as explained by Lord Ram to Sabari in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 35—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 36.

Earlier, sage Valmiki has also listed many places where Lord Ram resides in a symbolic form. To wit, if a devotee has any of the qualities listed by Valmiki, it means that Lord Ram is close to him. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 128—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 132.

²It is impossible to attain spiritual bliss, beatitude and felicity, it is impractical to attain eternal peace and blessedness, and it is not feasible to get salvation and emancipation for the soul without having devotion for Lord Ram, and without surrendering oneself before the holy feet of the Lord.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (i) Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 4; (ii) Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 35; (iii) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 35; (iv) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 45; (v) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precedes Doha no. 84; (vi) Uttar Kand, Doha no. 85-b; (vii) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precedes Doha no. 119; (viii) Uttar Kand, Doha no. 122 along with Chaupai line nos. 7-19 that precede it.

All these verses emphasise the importance of Bhakti.]

राकापति षोडस उअहिं तारागन समुदाइ ।

सकल गिरिन्ह दव लाइअ बिनु रबि राति न जाइ ॥ ७८ (ख) ॥

rākāpati ṣoṛasa u'ahim tārāgana samudā'i.

sakala girinha dava lā'i'a binu rabi rāti na jā'i. 78 (b).

It is just like the case that even though the full moon shines with all the sixteen aspects of its brilliance in full splendour, with all the millions of stars lending their

own light to it, they cannot remove the darkness of the night as the single sun can do as soon as it rises¹. (Doha no. 78-b)

[Note—¹To wit, no matter how hard a person tries to overcome Maya, no matter how many ways he adopts to accomplish success in this endeavour, he would fail unless he develops devotion for Lord Ram and focuses his mind on the Lord. This in due course would help him gain true knowledge of the Lord and his own self, i.e. about the Atma. As soon as he becomes self-realised and enlightened, all delusions would vanish, and this would be equivalent to attaining freedom from the snare of this gross world of sense objects that had pulled him towards its self for so long. He finds spiritual peace and happiness, and detachment from the world leads him onwards on the path of emancipation and salvation of his soul.]

चौ०. ऐसेहिं हरि बिनु भजन खगेसा । मिटइ न जीवन्ह केर कलेसा ॥ १ ॥
हरि सेवकहि न व्याप अबिद्या । प्रभु प्रेरित व्यापइ तेहि बिद्या ॥ २ ॥
caupāī.

aisēhiṁ hari binu bhajana khagēsā. miṭa'i na jīvanha kēra kalēsā. 1.
hari sēvakahi na byāpa abidyā. prabhu prērita byāpa'i tēhi bidyā. 2.

[Referring to the instances cited in Doha no. 78-b, Kaagbhusund told Garud—] Oh the King of Birds (khagēsā)! In the same manner (as the examples cited by me in Doha no. 78-b herein above), a Jiva's (living being's) miseries, torments and griefs related to life in this gross mortal world of transmigration cannot be mitigated or overcome without 'Bhaja'¹ of Lord Hari (i.e. Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being, who had manifested as Lord Ram). (1)

'Avidya' (lack of true knowledge; ignorance or lack of awareness of spiritual truth and reality) does not have any influence on the Sevak (follower, devotee, one who serves the Lord selflessly)² of Lord Hari.

On the contrary, by the grace of the Lord, only 'Vidya' (knowledge of the spiritual truth and Brahm, the supreme Consciousness; spiritual awareness; self-realisation with its attendant bliss and beatitude) can have its sway on the Lord's Sevak³. (2)

[Note—¹The term 'Bhajan' has already been explained in a note appended to Doha no. 78-a herein above.

²The term 'Sevak' has been explained in a note appended to Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 76 of this Book.

³To wit, the Lord ensures that his devotee is never tormented by the negative effects of Avidya. The Lord's devotee is always blissful and happy in the shadow of the Lord's grace and benevolence, and this state of beatitude and joy is similar to the one that is attained by acclaimed sages and saints upon self-realisation and Brahm-realisation even though the former, i.e. the Sevak of the Lord, may not be aware of his achievement. It comes to him unasked for; it's the Lord's gift to him.

In this context, refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 116; and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 3-10 that precede Doha no. 119 where it is clearly stated that ‘Avidya’ and its associated miseries and torments in this gross mortal world cannot exist simultaneously with the virtue of ‘Bhakti’ or devotion for Lord God. To wit, if one has Bhakti, one is free from the fear of Avidya.

The benefit that accrues to a devotee of Lord Ram is highlighted in the next verse.]

ताते नास न होइ दास कर । भेद भगति बाढ़इ बिहंगबर ॥ ३ ॥
भ्रम तें चकित राम मोहि देखा । बिहँसे सो सुनु चरित बिसेषा ॥ ४ ॥

tātē nāsa na hō'i dāsa kara. bhēda bhagati bārha'i bihaṅgabara. 3.
bhrama tēm cakita rāma mōhi dēkhā. bihamśē sō sunu carita bisēṣā. 4.

Oh the most exalted amongst the birds (“bihaṅgabara”—i.e. Garud)! This is the reason why a ‘dāsa’ of the Lord (i.e. a devotee and follower of the Lord, one who serves the Lord selflessly) does not fall from his path; he does not come to ruin as he is not subjected to distractions, temptations or worldly delusions that are caused by Avidya.

Apart from this benefit (of remaining free from all the miseries associated with Avidya), his level of Bhakti (devotion for the Lord) goes on steadily rising (by the grace of the Lord), and this exponential increase of Bhakti would automatically bring its natural rewards for him (i.e. the obedient servant, the devotee and the follower of the Lord God). (3)

When Lord Ram saw that I was stunned with astonishment, utterly dazed and bewildered by the Lord’s playful tricks and childish behaviour (as described from Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 75—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 78 herein above), he laughed at me. Now I shall narrate for you that fantastically unique story and its particulars as they unfolded before me. [The events were ‘fantastically unique’ as they were never repeated for anyone else again. I was the only privileged one to have witnessed it.] (4)

तेहि कौतुक कर मरमु न काहूँ । जाना अनुज न मातु पिताहूँ ॥ ५ ॥
जानु पानि धाए मोहि धरना । स्यामल गात अरुन कर चरना ॥ ६ ॥

tēhi kautuka kara maramu na kāhūṁ. jānā anuja na mātu pitāhūṁ. 5.
jānu pāni dhā'ē mōhi dharanā. syāmala gāta aruna kara caranā. 6.

No one, not even the Lord’s own younger brothers (Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan) nor his mother (Kaushalya), were aware of the secret that the Lord revealed to me through the mystical deeds that the Lord performed before me.

[To wit, though everyone was around—Lord Ram’s brothers were playing with him and his mother was within earshot—no one knew anything about the vision that I had at that time. The Lord’s magical tricks were limited for my personal

viewing. Indeed and in all sooth, this is the unique and special way the Lord blesses his devotees; no one comes to know what transpires between the Lord and his devotee: it's a secret between the two of them.] (5)

The Lord in his form as a child rushed after me on all fours, i.e. he dashed to catch hold of me by crawling fast on his hands and knees. He had a dark-hued complexion, and his palms and soles were of a red hue (like that of a lotus flower).

[To wit, the Lord smiled and gave out a shrill cry of joy as he dashed after me, crawling on his hands and knees as fast as a child can. It was a marvellous sight of exceptional wonder that I cannot forget!] (6)

तब मैं भागि चलेउँ उरगारी । राम गहन कहँ भुजा पसारी ॥ ७ ॥

जिमि जिमि दूरि उड़ाउँ अकासा । तहँ भुज हरि देखउँ निज पासा ॥ ८ ॥

taba maiṁ bhāgi calē'um' uragārī. rāma gahana kham' bhuja pasārī. 7.
jimi jimi dūri urā'um' akāsā. taham' bhuja hari dēkha'um' nija pāsā. 8.

Oh the enemy of serpents (“uragārī”—i.e. Garud)! Then I ran away from him (as fast as I could). Lord Ram extended his arms to catch me¹. (7)

[Now the wondrous marvel unfolded before the awe-struck eyes of Kaagbhusund that left him breathless and dazed.] I flew away in the sky, and I discovered that further and further I flew in the sky, I could still see the arms of Lord Hari (the child Lord Ram) following me from close quarters! [To wit, the more away I tried to fly from the Lord, the more the arms came closer and closer to me in hot pursuit.]² (8)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 77 along with Chaupai line nos. 9-10 that precede it. When we read these verses alongside the present verses, it becomes clear that the play between the child Lord Ram and his devotee Kaagbhusund, who had gone to be near the Lord, disguising himself as a crow so that it did not arouse suspicion, continues. Sometimes Kaagbhusund hopped to be near the Lord even as the Lord crawled away from him, and other times he would run away when the Lord turned back and tried to catch him! It was during this play that the Lord revealed to him the wondrous story that Kaagbhusund now narrates.

²Another similar incident is recorded in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 1—to Doha no. 2. Here, the crooked Jayant, the son of Indra, the king of gods, wanted to test the might of Lord Ram. So he assumed the form of a ‘crow’ and went to prick at the feet of Sita, the wife of Lord Ram, as she rested. To punish him, the Lord shot a reed which instantly transformed into an arrow without a head, and it followed Jayant to the heaven and everywhere else he ran to escape being killed.

The similarity and differences between Jayant's and Kaagbhusund's episodes are stark. Both were in the physical form of a ‘crow’, and both ran away into the sky. While Jayant was followed by the arrow wherever he went, Kaagbhusund was pursued by the Lord's arms in a similar manner. The similarity ended there. For while Jayant was a crooked fellow who wanted to test the might of Lord Ram and had been cruel enough to prick at the feet of Sita which resulted in her bleeding, Kaagbhusund

was a great and beloved devotee of the Lord and had gone to him to derive spiritual pleasure and bliss by being close to his favoured deity, the child Lord Ram.

Hence, while Jayant was pursued by the arrow to show Lord Ram's annoyance at him and was made one-eyed in the end as a token punishment, Kaagbhusund was followed by the Lord Ram's arms that would culminate in his having the cosmic vision of the Lord's vast and universal form that incorporated the entire universe in it as a gesture of Lord's blessing upon him.]

दो०. ब्रह्मलोक लागि गयउँ मैं चितयउँ पाछ उड़ात ।

जुग अंगुल कर बीच सब राम भुजहि मोहि तात ॥ ७९ (क) ॥

dōhā.

brahmalōka lagi gaya'um̐ mair̐ citaya'um̐ pācha urāta.

juga aṅgula kara bīca saba rāma bhujahi mōhi tāta. 79 (a).

On dear Garud (tāta)! I went on flying till I reached Brahma's abode in the heaven (known as the brahmalōka), but to my amazement I found that Lord Ram's arms was behind me, and the distance between me and the Lord's arms was only two fingers in its width. (Doha no. 79-a)

सप्ताबरन भेद करि जहाँ लगें गति मोरि ।

गयउँ तहाँ प्रभु भुज निरखि व्याकुल भयउँ बहोरि ॥ ७९ (ख) ॥

saptābarana bhēda kari jahām̐ lagēr̐ gati mōri.

gaya'um̐ tahām̐ prabhu bhuja nirakhi byākula bhaya'um̐ bahōri. 79 (b).

I penetrated all the seven subtle coverings that encircle the universe¹, and went to its outer reaches as far as I could go.

But when I discovered that the Lord's arms were behind me even there, I became flummoxed and alarmed. [To wit, when I found that the arms were pursuing me even in the deep bowls of the cosmos, I virtually panicked. It was like a nightmare for me. I thought that I was hallucinating.] (Doha no. 79-b)

[Note—¹According to metaphysical interpretation of the evolution of creation as envisioned in the Upanishads, there are seven subtle coverings that enclose the entire creation in layers of ascending levels of subtlety. They are the following elements: earth, water, fire, air, ether, cosmic ego known as Ahankar, and cosmic intellect known as Mahattatva or the cosmic Buddhi.

It is believed that the 'earth element' has a thickness of 50 Koti-Yojan, and the colour of this layer is yellow. ['1 Koti' = 10 million; '1 Yojan' = 4 or 8 or 16 miles according to different measuring systems, but generally the median figure of 8 miles in average is taken as a standard measurement.]

The second covering of 'water element' surrounds the earth. It is white in colour and about 500 Koti-Yojan in thickness.

The third layer is that of 'fire element'. Its colour is fiery red. It is about 5000 Koti-Yojan thick.

The fourth layer is 'air element'. Its colour is light green like a swirling dust storm. Its thickness is about 50,000 Koti-Yojan.

The next covering, the fifth one, is that of the 'sky element' that is blue in colour and about 500,000 Koti-Yojan thick.

The sixth layer is the 'cosmic ego' element. Its colour is a mixture of white, black and yellow, but black is the dominant colour. Its thickness is 50,00,000 Koti-Yojan.

The final seventh layer is the 'cosmic intellect' that has the colour of grey to indicate maturity of thought. It fills the space beyond the cosmic ego layer.

The same has been depicted in a different way in the Purans (ancient mythology) which say that there are seven worlds. For instance, according to the Brahmaand Purans (BP) and the Vaaman Puran (VP), the Lokas are the following—'Bhu/Bhūḥ' (भूः) or earth [BP-3,4,2-18]; 'Bhuvaha/Bhuvah' (भुवः) or the space between the earth and the heaven [BP-3,4,2-19]; 'Swaha/Swah' (स्वः) or the heavens known as Brahma's abode; the space beyond the earth's atmosphere; cosmic wind represented by the solar wind blows here [BP-3,4,2-20]; 'Maha/Mah' (महः) or the world created by Brahma pronouncing the divine word Maha meaning the great heaven or the outer space; it is believed that great sages and seers stay here; it is 1000 Yojans or appx. 8000 miles away from the Swaha Loka [BP-3,4,2-21; VP-52,21-22]; 'Janaha/Janah' (जन्ः), so called because it was to be inhabited by the humans and the cows [BP-3,4,2-22; VP-52, 22]; 'Tapaha/Tapah' (तपः) or the Loka where great amount of austerity and penances are done; it is said to be 60 million Yojans or appx. 60 x 8 million miles away from the Janaha Loka [BP-3,4,2-24; VP-52, 23]; and 'Satyam/Satyam' (सत्यम्) or the truthful heaven where the supreme Lord has his abode; it is 300 million Yojans or appx. 300 x 8 million miles beyond the Tapaha Loka [BP-3,4,2-25; VP-52, 24].

According to some legends, the distances of various mythological Lokas from the earth or Bhu Loka is as follows—the Bhuvha Loka is situated at a distance of 25 Lakh Yojans from earth, the Swaha Loka is situated at a distance of 50 Lakh Yojans from earth, the Maharloka is situated at a distance of 1 Crore Yojans from earth, the Jana Loka is situated at a distance of 2 Crore Yojans from earth, the Tapa Loka is situated at a distance of 4 Crore Yojans from earth, and the Satya Loka is situated at a distance of 8 Crore Yojans from earth.

1 Yojan = a distance of 4, 8 and 16 miles according to different calculations. It is usually taken to be equivalent to 8 miles.

1 Lakh = one hundred thousand (1,00,000). 1 Crore = ten Lakhs (10 x 1,00,000).

So essentially it means that Kaagbhusund went to the deep recesses of the cosmos where no one had gone earlier. But everywhere he found the arms of Lord Ram just behind him.]

चौ०. मूदेउँ नयन त्रसित जब भयऊँ । पुनि चितवत कोसलपुर गयऊँ ॥ १ ॥

मोहि बिलोकि राम मुसुकाहीं । बिहँसत तुरत गयउँ मुख माहीं ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

mūdē'umṁ nayana trasita jaba bhaya'ūṁṁ. puni citavata kōsalapura gaya'ūṁṁ. 1.
mōhi bilōki rāma musukāhīm. bihamṣata turata gaya'umṁ mukha māhīm. 2.

When I was scared out of my wits and highly agitated, being utterly bewildered and confused, I closed my eyes (to prevent my head from reeling further and stabilize it). When I opened them once again I found that I was in Kosalpur (i.e. in Ayodhya).

[To wit, after gathering some courage I slowly opened my eyes and rubbed them. Then I found myself back in the courtyard where I had been playing with the child Lord Ram a while ago.] (1)

[Another miracle happened now.] When Lord Ram saw me, he smiled once again at me (mischievously though). As soon as the Lord opened his mouth, I flew into it. [I thought that this was some new world, and since my mind was already in a delirious state, I quickly entered the Lord's open mouth to hide myself from the nightmare I had experienced just a while ago.]¹ (2)

[¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 54—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 55. Here, the divine consort of Lord Shiva, known as Uma, had also witnessed a miraculous sight where she had a divine vision of Lord Ram's cosmic all-incorporating vast form as the Lord of the Universe almost like the way Kaagbhusund experienced and would describe now.

Stunned and dazed by this sight, she was out of her wits and so much sore affright at the consequences of her doubting Shiva's words about the divinity of Lord Ram that she closed her eyes in shock and sat down on the ground as her head swirled round and round like a whirlpool.

Another similar incident—when one got transported miraculously to somewhere else by first closing the eyes and then opening them again—is found in Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 25. Here, the group of monkeys and bears who had gone in search of Sita had entered a deep cave in search of water. There they met a female mendicant who advised them to close their eyes and when they would open them they would find themselves at a place from where they can launch their final mission to find Sita. As advised by her, the monkeys and bears first closed their eyes and when they opened them they found themselves on the ocean's shore across which lay the island of Lanka in which Sita was held captive by the demon king Ravana.]

उदर माझ सुनु अंज राया । देखेऊँ बहु ब्रह्मांड निकाया ॥ ३ ॥

अति बिचित्र तहँ लोक अनेका । रचना अधिक एक ते एका ॥ ४ ॥

udara mājha sunu aṇḍaja rāyā. dēkhē'umṁ bahu brahmāṇḍa nikāyā. 3.
ati bicitra tahamṁ lōka anēkā. racanā adhika ēka tē ēkā. 4.

Listen oh the King of Birds (“aṇḍaja rāyā”—literally, the king of those who are born from eggs like the birds)! Inside the Lord's abdomen I saw countless clusters of universes in different stages of evolution. (3)

In those universes there were a wide variety of smaller or bigger worlds, each literally more fascinating and stunning than the other. (4)

कोटिन्ह चतुरानन गौरीसा । अगनित उडगन रबि रजनीसा ॥ ५ ॥
अगनित लोकपाल जम काला । अगनित भूधर भूमि बिसाला ॥ ६ ॥

kōṭinha caturānana gaurīsā. aganita uḍagana rabi rajanīsā. 5.
aganita lōkapāla jama kālā. aganita bhūdhara bhūmi bisālā. 6.

In these universes, there were thousands of Brahmas, the four-headed Creator, and Shivas, the Lord of Gauri or Parvati; there were un-countable numbers of stars, suns and moons (which is called the lord of the night—“*rajanīsa*”); and similarly there were countless Lokapaals (custodians of the different worlds), Yams and Kaals (the gods of hell and death respectively).

Then there were huge mountains and hills and earths of different sizes that could not be counted. (5-6)

सागर सरि सर बिपिन अपारा । नाना भाँति सृष्टि बिस्तारा ॥ ७ ॥
सुर मुनि सिद्ध नाग नर किंनर । चारि प्रकार जीव सचराचर ॥ ८ ॥

sāgara sari sara bipina apārā. nānā bhāmṭi sṛṣṭi bistārā. 7.
sura muni sid'dha nāga nara kinnara. cāri prakāra jīva sacarācara. 8.

Innumerable oceans, rivers, lakes and forests along with many other forms of this magical creation in its extensive variation and expansion were seen by me there. (7)

I also observed a countless numbers and a wide variety of gods, sages, mystics, serpents, humans and semi-gods known as Kinnars, and all the four forms of living beings found in the animate as well as the inanimate world¹.# (8)

[Note—¹The four varieties of living beings are the following—(i) Udbhij: These are those life forms that are born from seeds, such as members of the plant kingdom. These have only one Kalaa or aspect of the Atma called Anna Maye Kosh or Kalaa. In other words, they depend on food and become food for others higher up in the evolutionary ladder. (ii) Swedaj: They are those which are born from dampness and sweat, such as fungi, algae, bacteria, germs, mosquito, lice, flies etc. They have two Kalaas, viz. Anna Maye and Pran Maye. That is, they are formed from food, they live for food and they die as food. Besides this, they also exhibit signs of life, e.g. the mosquito and lice have life like any other member of the animal kingdom. (iii) Andaj: They are placed higher up in the evolutionary ladder, and are born from eggs, whether inside the mother's womb or outside. Such birds as pigeon, sparrow, parrot, peacock etc. come under this category. They have three Kalaas which are Anna Maye, Pran Maye and Mano-maye. The last Kalaa refers to the fact that such creatures have a mind and heart which enables them to think, albeit in a primitive level. (iv) Jaruyuj: These are the creatures that are born as embryo that develops inside the mother's womb. Under this class come the animals such as horses, cows, dogs, elephants etc.

#In brief, Kaagbhusund saw an amazing kaleidoscopic view of creation in all its fascinating variations that mystified, dazed as well as enthralled him no end, as asserted by himself in the next Doha no. 80 herein below.]

दो०. जो नहिं देखा नहिं सुना जो मनहूँ न समाइ ।
सो सब अद्भुत देखेउँ बरनि कवनि बिधि जाइ ॥ ८० (क) ॥
dōhā.

jō nahim dēkhā nahim sunā jō manahūṁ na samā'i.
sō saba adbhuta dēkhē'um' barani kavani bidhi jā'i. 80 (a).

What I had never seen, what I had never heard of, and what I just could not imagine in the wildest of my dreams—I saw all such strange things and the most bewildering of sights which I don't know how to describe. (Doha no. 80-a)

एक एक ब्रह्मांड महुँ रहउँ बरष सत एक ।
एहि बिधि देखत फिरउँ मैं अंड कटाह अनेक ॥ ८०(ख) ॥

ēka ēka brahmāṇḍa mahum' raha'um' baraṣa sata ēka.
ēhi bidhi dēkhata phira'um' mairi aṇḍa kaṭāha anēka. 80(b).

I stayed in each of the universes for a hundred-and-one years, and in this way I roamed in many universes which were round in shape like an egg, and everywhere I saw most marvellous sights that defy imagination and description¹. (Doha no.80-b)

[Note—¹In Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 82 Kaagbhusund says that he roamed around for one hundred and one Kalpas in the different universes. Though it is not clear how many universes Kaagbhusund visited, but it is certain that he spent one hundred and one years in each of them.

Remember: What we are talking about here is not the mortal gross world known to us, but a subtle world transcendental existence where time and space are measured in different units than what we are accustomed to. See the above referred Chaupai herein below for more details.]

चौ०. लोक लोक प्रति भिन्न बिधाता । भिन्न बिष्णु सिव मनु दिसित्राता ॥ १ ॥
नर गंधर्ब भूत बेताला । किंनर निसिचर पसु खग ब्याला ॥ २ ॥
caupā'i.

lōka lōka prati bhinna bidhātā. bhinna biṣṇu siva manu disitrātā. 1.
nara gandharba bhūta bētālā. kinnara nisicara pasu khaga byālā. 2.

Each world or Loka that I visited had its own set life in its various forms and stages of evolution. Every world had a different Creator Brahma, Lord Vishnu, Lord Shiva, Manu (the first male from whom the human generation descended), Dikpals (the

guardians or caretakers of the four quarters of the world; kind of semi-gods), human beings, Gandharvas (celestial musicians and decorators of the heaven; a sort of semi-gods), ghosts, phantoms and spirits, Kinnars (celestial dancers and singers in the heavenly court of the gods; they have the head of a horse), demons who roamed in the night, animals, birds and serpents. (1-2)

देव दनुज गन नाना जाती । सकल जीव तहँ आनहि भाँती ॥ ३ ॥

महि सरि सागर सर गिरि नाना । सब प्रपंच तहँ आनइ आना ॥ ४ ॥

dēva danuja gana nānā jāti. sakala jīva taham'ānahi bhām'tī. 3.
mahī sari sāgara sara giri nānā. saba prapañca taham'āna'i ānā. 4.

There were gods and demons of all classes, big and small. In fact, the creatures living in a particular world had their own unique characteristics and qualities that varied from one to another universe. (3)

There were uncountable earths, rivers, oceans, lakes, hills and mountains. It was a wondrous spectacle of stupendous proportions, where variations were so vast and immense that no place or its inhabitants were similar to the other on any count. (4)

अंडकोस प्रति प्रति निज रूपा । देखेउँ जिनस अनेक अनूपा ॥ ५ ॥

अवधपुरी प्रति भुवन निनारी । सरजू भिन्न भिन्न नर नारी ॥ ६ ॥

aṇḍakōsa prati prati nija rūpā. dēkhē'um'jinasa anēka anūpā. 5.
avadhapurī prati bhuvana ninārī. sarajū bhinna bhinna nara nārī. 6.

(The wonder of all wonders was that—) In each of these rounded egg-like universes I saw my own image as if I was present in all of them at the same time! Apart from this, I also saw many unique and beautiful things that completely baffled me. (5)

For instance, in each of the Bhuvans (worlds) that I visited I saw the city of Ayodhya with its river Saryu and male and female citizens, but each city, river and the inhabitants were unique in themselves, and they were different from the ones I saw in other worlds and universes. (6)

दसरथ कौसल्या सुनु ताता । बिबिध रूप भरतादिक भ्राता ॥ ७ ॥

प्रति ब्रह्मांड राम अवतारा । देखेउँ बालबिनोद अपारा ॥ ८ ॥

dasaratha kausalyā sunu tātā. bibidha rūpa bharatādika bhrātā. 7.
prati brahmāṇḍa rāma avatārā. dēkha'um'bālabinōda apārā. 8.

My dear (tātā), listen! Lord Ram's parents, King Dasrath and mother Kaushalya, as well as the Lord's brother Bharat and others too were different in all the Ayodhyas I visited. (7)

Indeed, each universe had its own incarnation of Lord Ram, and in each of them I could see the infinitely charming ways of the Lord as he played around in different ways in the form of a child. [But all these manifestations or visible forms of Lord Ram were the same as clearly mentioned in Doha no. 81-b below.] (8)

दो०. भिन्न भिन्न मैं दीख सबु अति बिचित्र हरिजान ।
अगनित भुवन फिरेउँ प्रभु राम न देखेउँ आन ॥ ८१ (क) ॥

dōhā.

bhinna bhinna maim dīkha sabu ati bicitra harijāna.
aganita bhuvana phirē'um' prabhu rāma na dēkhē'um' āna. 81 (a).

Oh the celestial mount of Lord Hari ("harijāna"—i.e. Garud)! Everything I saw was different from the other and had its own distinctiveness, and in all sooth and without gainsay it was indeed a wondrous spectacle that awed and perplexed me beyond imagination.

But inspite of this astounding diversity and stupendity of variation, one thing stood out remarkably—in all the innumerable universes and worlds where I roamed, I saw only one form of my Lord Sri Ram; there were no changes in him. There was the same form of Lord Ram everywhere though everything else changed around me from one world or universe to another. (Doha no. 81-a)

सोइ सिसुपन सोइ सोभा सोइ कृपाल रघुबीर ।
भुवन भुवन देखत फिरउँ प्रेरित मोह समीर ॥ ८१ (ख) ॥

sō'i sisupana sō'i sōbhā sō'i krpāla raghubīra.
bhuvana bhuvana dēkhata phira'um' prērita mōha samīra. 81 (b).

Impelled by the wind of delusions and inspired by an inquisitive mind that was infatuated with amazement by the sights I saw, I roamed around from one world to another in the countless universes. But to my utter astonishment, I saw the same merciful Lord Ram in the form of a child, having the same bewitching charm and beauty, wherever I went. (Doha no. 81-b)

चौ०. भ्रमत मोहि ब्रह्मांड अनेका । बीते मनहुँ कल्प सत एका ॥ १ ॥
फिरत फिरत निज आश्रम आयउँ । तहँ पुनि रहि कछु काल गवाँयउँ ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

bhramata mōhi brahmāṇḍa anēkā. bītē manahum' kalpa sata ēkā. 1.
phirata phirata nija āśrama āya'um'. taham' puni rahi kachu kāla gavāmya'um'. 2.

It appeared to me that I had spent one hundred and one Kalpas¹ while wondering in the countless Brahmaands or universe (and saw marvellous sights as described herein above). (1)

During these travels I also came back to my own hermitage and spent some time there before resuming my journey.

[To wit, at the end of one round of my journey through a particular world, I came back to my hermitage that existed in that world to abide there for some time and take some rest.]² (2)

[Note—¹Kalpa is a unit of measurement of years. 1 human years = 1 day of the gods; and 1000 years of the gods = 1 Kalpa. At the end of each Kalpa there is dissolution of creation existing at that time in which all the three Lokas, i.e. the heaven, the terrestrial and the nether worlds, come to an end.

Earlier in Doha no. 80-b we have already read that Kaagbhusund stayed for one hundred and one years in each universe. In this way he wondered in countless universes for a total of roughly one hundred and one Kalpas.

²Obviously Kaagbhusund may have seen his own hermitage in each of the worlds he visited. So after getting tired of travelling he may have come to take rest in his hermitage and spend some time there before continuing with his journey of discovery.

The basic idea here is that creation and life in it are a continuous cycle of birth and death, of a beginning and an end, and so the wheel of creation continues to rotate endlessly. Another salient feature of this creation is that it is continuously changing; no two things, individuals and times are alike.

In this state of flux, the only constant entity is the 'Truth', for it remains the same and is unaffected by time and space. And from the perspective of metaphysics, this Truth is called pure 'Consciousness'. It is eternal, imperishable and constant; it predates each cycle of creation and outlives it till the next cycle starts rolling once again.

Since Kaagbhusund had witnessed all these cycles, it is clear that he is not talking about his gross physical body which dies and perishes when its time comes, but he is talking about his ethereal form, his 'true self' which is his Atma or soul, and this Atma itself is pure Consciousness. To wit, Kaagbhusund travelled in the universes in Spirit form, in a disembodied form as the Atma that is free from the limitations of the gross physical body. That is why he did not 'die' and managed to 'live' for such a long duration during these travels.]

निज प्रभु जन्म अवध सुनि पायउँ । निर्भर प्रेम हरषि उठि धायउँ ॥ ३ ॥

देखउँ जन्म महोत्सव जाई । जेहि बिधि प्रथम कहा मैं गाई ॥ ४ ॥

nija prabhu janma avadha suni pāya'um̃. nirbhara prēma haraṣi uṭhi dhāya'um̃. 3.

dēkha'um̃ janma mahōtsava jā'ī. jēhi bidhi prathama kahā maim gā'ī. 4.

While staying there (in my hermitage), whenever I heard¹ that my beloved Lord Ram has taken a birth (in the form of a human being) in Ayodhya, I used to become thrilled and rushed there to meet him. (3)

I would go and witness the birth celebrations of the Lord in the same manner I have already described to you (Garud) now². (4)

[Note—¹From whom did Kaagbhusund hear about the birth of the Supreme Being in the form of Lord Ram? Well, it was from the Gods, such as Brahma and Shiva. When the Lord revealed himself on the earth, there were celebrations in heaven where the celestial musicians, dancers and singers danced and played musical instruments. This is clearly hinted in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 191 along with Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precede it.

²To wit, in all the worlds Kaagbhusund roamed during his journey through the different universes, he had witnessed the birth celebrations of Lord Ram in the same way as he has experienced it in his present life about which he is currently telling Garud.]

राम उदर देखेउँ जग नाना । देखत बनइ न जाइ बखाना ॥ ५ ॥
तहँ पुनि देखेउँ राम सुजाना । माया पति कृपाल भगवाना ॥ ६ ॥

rāma udara dēkhē'um' jaga nānā. dēkhata bana'i na jā'i bakhānā. 5.
tahaṁ' puni dēkhē'um' rāma sujānā. māyā pati kṛpāla bhagavānā. 6.

[Coming back to the point from where Kaagbhusund had started his narration about his marvellous experiences as soon as he flew into the mouth of Lord Ram as mentioned in Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 80 herein above, he told Garud—]

In this fantastic and unbelievable way, I saw innumerable universes that defy description and were beyond imagination in the abdomen of Lord Ram. (5)

Everywhere and in each of the worlds that I visited, I again and again saw the same merciful and gracious form of Lord Sri Ram who is the wise and enlightened Lord of Maya (delusions)¹. (6)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 81-a, which reiterates the same point.]

करउँ बिचार बहोरि बहोरी । मोह कलिल व्यापित मति मोरी ॥ ७ ॥
उभय घरी महुँ मैं सब देखा । भयउँ भ्रमित मन मोह बिसेषा ॥ ८ ॥

kara'um' bicāra bahōri bahōrī. mōha kalila byāpita mati mōrī. 7.
ubhaya gharī maham' maim saba dēkhā. bhaya'um' bhramita mana mōha bisēṣā. 8.

But this experience had completely baffled me; I was overcome with bewilderment and confusion. I pondered over repeatedly about what I had witnessed, but it defied

my comprehension because Moha (delusions and imaginary visions) had cast a dark mist over my mind and intellect¹. (7)

The wonder of wonders is that all this was seen, witnessed or experienced by me in a very short period of time (which was literally equivalent to “two Gharis”)². This caused a lot of bewilderment for me, and I was extremely amazed at what I had witnessed. (8)

[Note—¹What does Kaagbhusund mean here? He means that though he is a self-realised, enlightened and wise soul who is blessed with knowledge of the Truth and therefore knows very well the truth of Lord Ram and creation, still he could not understand the underlying essence of the sights he saw. He was so amazed and dazed by the miraculous spectacles he saw that for once he forgot that the world is ever-changeable, and the only entity that remains constant is pure cosmic Consciousness that is represented by Lord Ram known as the Parmatma or the Supreme Atma, as well as his own ‘true self’ known as his Atma. This Atma is a sublime, ethereal and subtle entity that is different and separate from the rest of the gross perishable world. This is what Kaagbhusund means that delusions had overcome him.

²Kaagbhusund had the miraculous experience of wondering for hundreds and thousands of years in countless universes that actually lasted only for a while in physical terms. This is the magical affect of Maya or delusions. The affected person has such hallucinating experiences that would defy all explanations from a practical point of view, but the person concerned believes that what he had witnessed was actually true.

2 ½ Hours = 1 Ghari. This means ‘2 Gharis’ is equivalent to 48 minutes. This measurement of time is for technical reasons, but in practice the term ‘two Gharis’ is used to mean a very short duration of time, or some quick development.

Kaagbhusund was so deluded that he had thought that a long time equivalent to 101 Kalpas had passed while he travelled in the many universes while actually it was only a brief period of some minutes.

Remember: Kaagbhusund was having this fantastic vision while his eyes were closed—refer Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 80 herein above. It is therefore absolutely clear that he was merely kind of ‘day-dreaming’.]

दो०. देखि कृपाल बिकल मोहि बिहँसे तब रघुबीर ।
बिहँसतहीं मुख बाहेर आयउँ सुनु मतिधीर ॥ ८२ (क) ॥
dōhā.

dēkhi kṛpāla bikala mōhi bihamśē taba raghubīra.
bihamśatahīm mukha bāhēra āya'um'sunu matidhīra. 82 (a).

When the merciful Lord saw my perplexed expressions and the way I was feeling restless by the visions I had, he laughed once again.

Oh the one who has a steady and resolute mind (“matidhīra”—i.e. Garud)! As soon as the Lord opened his mouth to laugh, I immediately came out of his belly. (Doha no. 82-a)

सोइ लरिकाई मो सन करन लगे पुनि राम ।
कोटि भाँति समुझावउँ मनु न लहइ बिश्राम ॥ ८२ (ख) ॥

sō'i larikā'ī mō sana karana lagē puni rāma.
kōṭi bhāmṭi samujhāva'umṃ manu na laha'i biśrāma. 82 (b).

Immediately thereafter, Lord Ram resumed his childish pranks with me (as if nothing at all had happened).

Even though I tried in millions of ways to calm down my mind and reason with it, but it refused to be at peace. (82-b)

चौ०. देखि चरित यह सो प्रभुताई । समुझत देह दसा बिसराई ॥ १ ॥
धरनि परेउँ मुख आव न बाता । त्राहि त्राहि आरत जन त्राता ॥ २ ॥
caupā'ī.

dēkhi carita yaha sō prabhutā'ī. samujhata dēha dasā bisarā'ī. 1.
dharani parē'umṃ mukha āva na bātā. trāhi trāhi ārata jana trātā. 2.

Observing the Lord's childish activities on the one hand, and the Lord's cosmic play that I witnessed in his belly a while ago, I was awe-struck and flummoxed beyond imagination, and lost awareness of my body (i.e. I became absolutely dumb and stunned because I could not reconcile the two forms of the Lord)¹.

[¹To wit, I failed to realise that the 'child' I am seeing playing before me was not an ordinary human child, but he was the Supreme Being himself in that form. In this connection it is said in Ram Charit Manas that those who are wise and enlightened abandon all sorts of doubtings and confusions regarding Lord Ram, and instead worship and honour the Lord with a dedicated mind. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (i) Baal Kand, Doha no. 115; (ii) Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 83; and (iii) Uttar Kand, Doha no. 90.] (1)

So in my consternation and anxiety, I fell to the ground, pleading to the merciful Lord to protect me. I cried, 'Oh Lord who is a protector of his devotees and who removes their distress (ārata jana trātā)! Please save me from the utter distress I am in.' No other word came out of my mouth, so utterly confounded was I. (2)

प्रेमाकुल प्रभु मोहि बिलोकी । निज माया प्रभुता तब रोकी ॥ ३ ॥
कर सरोज प्रभु मम सिर धरेऊ । दीनदयाल सकल दुख हरेऊ ॥ ४ ॥

prēmākula prabhu mōhi bilōkī. nija māyā prabhutā taba rōkī. 3.
kara sarōja prabhu mama sira dharē'ū. dīnadayāla sakala dukha harē'ū. 4.

Thereafter, when the Lord observed that I am very restless and overcome with affection for him, he stopped his Maya (delusions and confusions) from having its overpowering influence upon me.

[To wit, when the “Lord of Maya” found me in distress and tormented by the effects of Maya, he showed his merciful nature by checking Maya and instructing it not to disturb me any further.] (3)

Even as he stopped Maya, he put his lotus-like palm (of his hand) on my head and immediately eliminated all distress and misery that had been tormenting me¹. (4)

[Note—¹It is to be noted here that Maya has a natural tendency to prey and pounce upon one and all, and it stops disturbing a creature only when the Lord orders it to do so. Even the greatest of sages and wise-ones were overcome by the affects of Maya. Even the Lord himself is surprised at the power that Maya wields over the world. These facts are mentioned in the context of sage Narad getting deluded under the influence of Maya though he was a wise and celestial sage. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 132; (ii) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 133; and (iii) line no. 2 of Doha no. 137 along with Chaupai line no. 1 that follows it.]

कीन्ह राम मोहि बिगत बिमोहा । सेवक सुखद कृपा संदोहा ॥ ५ ॥
प्रभुता प्रथम बिचारि बिचारी । मन महँ होइ हरष अति भारी ॥ ६ ॥

kīnha rāma mōhi bigata bimōhā. sēvaka sukhada kṛpā sandōhā. 5.
prabhutā prathama bicāri bicārī. mana maham̐ hō'i haraṣa ati bhārī. 6.

The merciful Lord who bestows happiness and joy upon his devotees and followers made me completely free from delusions and confusions along with their accompanying mental agitations. (5)

When I recollected the visions I had that showed the supreme Authority of the Lord and his cosmic Powers that I had witnessed just a while ago, I rejoiced at the thought and felt extremely exhilarated and ecstatic¹. (6)

[¹Note the difference: just a while ago Kaagbhusund was restless by recollecting the visions he saw, and now when the Lord freed him of delusions he is rejoicing by remembering the same sights!]

भगत बछलता प्रभु कै देखी । उपजी मम उर प्रीति बिसेषी ॥ ७ ॥
सजल नयन पुलकित कर जोरी । कीन्हिउँ बहु बिधि बिनय बहोरी ॥ ८ ॥

bhagata bachalatā prabhu kai dēkhī. upajī mama ura prīti bisēṣī. 7.
sajala nayana pulakita kara jōrī. kīnhi'um̐ bahu bidhi binaya bahōrī. 8.

Observing the way the Lord showed his grace, mercy and affection for his devotees, especially immense devotion and love for the Lord sprouted in my heart.

[To wit, I already had a lot of affection and devotion for the Lord in my heart because this was the primary reason I had gone from my hermitage to visit him and stay with him for some time at Ayodhya. But when I personally experienced how the

Lord loves his devotees—especially when he put his hands on my head to bless and caress me fondly, I felt a surge of warm feelings for Lord Ram overwhelming my inner-self; I felt extremely thrilled and exhilarated in my heart, and my whole body had goose bumps.] (7)

Then, with tears in my eyes and a thrilled body, I joined my palms and prayed to the Lord in various ways. (8)

दो०. सुनि सप्रेम मम बानी देखि दीन निज दास ।

बचन सुखद गंभीर मृदु बोले रमानिवास ॥ ८३(क) ॥

dōhā.

sunī saprēma mama bānī dēkhi dīna nija dāsa.

bacana sukhada gambhīra mṛdu bōlē ramānivāsa. 83(a).

When the Lord of Laxmi (“ramānivāsa”—i.e. Lord Vishnu who had manifested in the visible form of Lord Ram) heard my affectionate prayers and found that I am his humble devotee and servant, he spoke with a pleasant voice that gave joy and happiness to me, but his words had profound meaning. He said— (Doha no. 83-a)

काकभसुंडि मागु बर अति प्रसन्न मोहि जानि ।

अनिमादिक सिद्धि अपर रिधि मोच्छ सकल सुख खानि ॥ ८३(ख) ॥

kākabhasuṇḍi māgu bara ati prasanna mōhi jāni.

animādika sidhi apara ridhi mōccha sakala sukha khāni. 83(b).

The Lord said, ‘Oh Kaagbhusund! Ask for any boon of your choice, knowing that I am very pleased with you. Ask me for anything—such as the various mystical powers known as ‘Siddhis’ like ‘Anima’ etc.¹, or wealth, material well-being and achievements known as ‘Riddhis’, or ‘Moksha’ (meaning salvation and emancipation; oneness with the Supreme Soul; freedom from the cycle of birth and death) which is a mine of all happiness, joy, bliss and beatitude.’ (Doha no. 83-b)

[¹Note— The *Bhavana Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 2, stanza no. 16 refers to *nine Siddhis*. They are the following—(i) ‘Anima’ ‘अणिमा’ means the power to become microscopic or so minute that one becomes invisible to the naked eye; to become small like an atom; (ii) ‘Mahima’ ‘महिमा’ is to have majesty, glory and fame; to be honoured and acknowledged for one’s achievements, wisdom, erudition, knowledge and skills; to become huge like a mountain, thereby standing out and being unique or special in a crowd; (iii) ‘Garima’ ‘गरिमा’ is to be heavy-weight in any field, to have special qualities that give one’s ideas and words a great amount of importance and weight; to have stature, dignity, decorum, gravity and significance; (iv) ‘Laghima’ ‘लघिमा’ is the grand virtue of being simple and humble inspite of being great, powerful and authoritative; it is to have simplicity and humility despite possessing grandeur, majesty, power, authority and magnificence; (v) ‘Praapti’ ‘प्राप्ति’

is to be able to attain, gain or obtain anything wished or desired for; (vi) 'Praakramya' 'प्राक्रम्य' is to have valour, ardour, strength, powers, prowess, potential and punch leading to triumph, glory and majesty; (vii) 'Ishwatwa' 'ईश्वत्त्व' is to be able to have lordship or sway over everything else; to be able to rule over others; (viii) 'Vashitwa' 'वशित्व' is to be able to control and subdue others, and exert influence on them so much so that they become obedient and subservient; and (ix) 'Praakaashya' 'प्राकाश्य' is to be able to assume any form one wishes.

Sometimes, Paraakramya is replaced by 'Praakaamya' 'प्राकाम्य' which means irresistible will. But they imply the same thing because one obtains victory and glory only when one has an irresistible desire to attain it.

According to some versions, 'Mukti', or to obtain liberation and deliverance from all sorts of bondages and fetters, is also regarded as one of the Siddhis. It is closely related to 'Moksha' meaning final spiritual emancipation and deliverance of the aspirant.

According to some other accounts, 'Bhukti'—i.e. the ability to enjoy whatever one wishes to acquire and enjoy, is also one of the nine Siddhis.]

चौ०. ग्यान बिबेक बिरति बिग्याना । मुनि दुर्लभ गुन जे जग नाना ॥ १ ॥

आजु देउँ सब संसय नाहीं । मागु जो तोहि भाव मन माहीं ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

gyāna bibēka birati bigyānā. muni durlabha guna jē jaga nānā. 1.

āju dē'um̐ saba sansaya nāhīm. māgu jō tōhi bhāva mana māhīm. 2.

[Lord Ram continued—] 'The virtues of enlightenment and spiritual wisdom, of the ability for critical judgement and discrimination between the false and truth, of renunciation, dispassion and detachment, of true knowledge and analytical abilities, and all other eclectic spiritual virtues and metaphysical knowledge in this world¹ that are difficult even for the exalted sages and seers to access --- [1]

--- Verily indeed and without any doubt, I shall grant all of them to you today. Ask what you wish for (and it would be granted immediately to you by me)² [2]. (1-2)

[Note—¹The 'Gyan', 'Vigyan', 'Vivek' and other virtues referred to here pertain to knowledge of the true nature of the 'self' and the 'Atma', about the universal truths that govern this creation, about the essential elements that constitute the creation, about the all-pervading, sublime and eternal nature of the pure Consciousness that is the only reality in this creation and represents the true 'self' of the individual living being at the micro level of existence as well as of the Supreme Being at the macro level of the cosmos.

Taken all-in-all, these terms essentially refer to the spiritual aspects of metaphysical knowledge.

²There are other instances in Ram Charit Manas also where Lord Ram was willing to grant the wishes of his devotee. For instance, (i) in Baal Kand, Doha no. 148 where Lord Vishnu had told Manu and his wife Satrupa, who had been doing severe Tapa or penance, to seek any boon they wanted and the Lord would grant it to them instantly; and (ii) in Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 23 that precedes Doha no. 11 where Lord

Ram told sage Sutikshan that he may ask for any boon that he wished to have and it shall be fulfilled.]

सुनि प्रभु बचन अधिक अनुरागेउँ । मन अनुमान करन तब लागेउँ ॥ ३ ॥
प्रभु कह देन सकल सुख सही । भगति आपनी देन न कही ॥ ४ ॥

sunī prabhu bacana adhika anurāgē'um̐. mana anumāna karana taba lāgē'um̐.

3.

prabhu kaha dēna sakala sukha sahī. bhagati āpanī dēna na kahī. 4.

Hearing the Lord's words, my affection and love for him grew manifold and I was overwhelmed by this emotion. I began to ponder in my mind as follows: — (3)

'It is alright that the gracious Lord has told me that he is willing to bless me with all types of boons that would give me happiness and joy, but he has not said that he would grant his 'Bhakti' or the virtue of devotion to me. (4)

भगति हीन गुन सब सुख ऐसे । लवन बिना बहु बिंजन जैसे ॥ ५ ॥
भजन हीन सुख कवने काजा । अस बिचारि बोलेउँ खगराजा ॥ ६ ॥

bhagati hīna guna saba sukha aisē. lavana binā bahu bin̄jana jaisē. 5.
bhajana hīna sukha kavanē kājā. asa bicāri bōlē'um̐ khagarājā. 6.

Without Bhakti (devotion for the Lord God) all other virtues and qualities are like food that has no salt in it. To wit, just like food tastes bland and insipid without salt, all other virtues and blessings that the Lord may grant to me are worthless and futile and not worth any effort if he does not bless me with the grandest virtue of having Bhakti for him. (5)

What is the use of, and what purpose will be served by having all sorts of joys and happiness in life in this world if one has no devotion for the Lord in one's heart, if one's mind is not devoted to worshipping, honouring and remembering Lord Ram¹.

Thinking thus, oh the king of birds (Garud), I replied to the Lord --- (6)

[¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precede Doha no. 95—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 96 where Kaagbhusund has told Garud that he loves his body of a 'crow' as it is in this body that he had been blessed with Bhakti for Lord Ram.

The importance of Bhakti has been stressed by Kaagbhusund elsewhere also during his conversation with Garud which is in the form of a spiritual discourse. For instance, refer to: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 115; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precede Doha no. 119; (iii) Chaupai line nos. 7-19 that precede Doha no. 122.]

जौं प्रभु होइ प्रसन्न बर देहू । मो पर करहु कृपा अरु नेहू ॥ ७ ॥
मन भावत बर मागउँ स्वामी । तुम्ह उदार उर अंतरजामी ॥ ८ ॥

jauṁ prabhu hō'i prasanna bara dēhū. mō para karahu kṛpā aru nēhū. 7.
mana bhāvata bara māga'um̐ svāmī. tumha udāra ura antarajāmī. 8.

‘Oh Lord, if you are so pleased with me that you are ready to grant any boon to me that I would like to have, and if you do have so much affection and mercy for me that you would willingly fulfil my wish, --- (7)

--- Then I shall ask you for something that I would really like to have, something that I truly am fond of and yearn for. Oh Lord, you are a most magnanimous and gracious giver of all, and being all-knowing you are also aware of my inner thoughts.

[To wit oh Lord, since you are “antarajāmī”, i.e. one who lives in the inner-self of all living beings, and therefore is aware of all thoughts, notions, feeling, sentiments and emotions of the creature, there is nothing hidden from you. You will immediately know whether what I am about to seek from you now is indeed my true wish and coming out straight from the inner core of my heart, or if it is just a pretension on my part to look nice and good to you in my cunning attempt to please you and seek something more valuable and better from you by way of a boon.] (8)

दो०. अबिरल भगति बिसुद्ध तव श्रुति पुरान जो गाव ।
जेहि खोजत जोगीस मुनि प्रभु प्रसाद कोउ पाव ॥ ८४ (क) ॥
dōhā.

abirala bhagati bisud'dha tava śruti purāna jō gāva.
jēhi khōjata jōgīsa muni prabhu prasāda kō'u pāva. 84 (a).

That undiluted and prisine pure form of Bhakti (devotion) of yours which is steady and uninterrupted, and about which the Vedas and Purans have always sung (i.e. have espoused, honoured and lauded)¹, that Bhakti which is searched for by so many exalted and acclaimed sages, ascetics and hermits but only a few amongst them, upon whom you are gracious and pleased, are able to access --- (Doha no. 84-a)

[Note—¹Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 45 where Lord Ram has himself asserted that the eternal importance and value of Bhakti has been praised and sung by the Vedas and the Purans, i.e. by the ancient scriptures.]

भगत कल्पतरु प्रनत हित कृपा सिंधु सुख धाम ।
सोइ निज भगति मोहि प्रभु देहु दया करि राम ॥ ८४ (ख) ॥

bhagata kalpataru pranata hita kṛpā sindhu sukha dhāma.
sō'i nija bhagati mōhi prabhu dēhu dayā kari rāma. 84 (b).

Oh gracious and merciful Lord Ram who is like the Kalpa Tree (the all wish-fulfilling tree of the gods) for his devotees (*bhagata kalpataru*), who is the benevolent well-wisher of those who surrender before you and take refuge and shelter in your holy feet (*pranata hita*), who is like an ocean of mercy, grace, compassion and kindness (*krpā sindhu*), and who is an embodiment of eternal bliss and happiness (*sukha dhāma*)—please be kind and merciful enough to grant me that ‘Bhakti’ of yours.’

[To wit, oh Lord, I don’t want anything. I am contented to be near you and have the privilege of playing with you like I was a close and dear friend of yours. The fact that you have acknowledged my love for you and reciprocated it with your own love for me is sufficient enough of a reward for me. You have blessed me by placing your hands on my head; you have shown me your cosmic form that rarely any living being has ever seen or would ever see. You have given me free access to you. Them, to cap them all, you are ready to grant anything I wish. What more would I want?

But in case you insist that you do want to give me some kind of gift, then give me something of real value that I would cherish for life, and it is the boon of having undiluted and eternal devotion for you. The other things you mentioned can be granted by other gods if I cared for any of them, but ‘Bhakti for Lord Ram’ is something so exclusive that it can be granted only by Lord Ram himself and no one else!

Therefore, if you really want to give me some gift, give me your Bhakti; otherwise I am happy, and ‘Thank Thee indeed’!] (Doha no. 84-b)

चौ०. एवमस्तु कहि रघुकुलनायक । बोले बचन परम सुखदायक ॥ १ ॥

सुनु बायस तैं सहज सयाना । काहे न मागसि अस बरदाना ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

ēvamastu kahi raghukulanāyaka. bōlē bacana parama sukhadāyaka. 1.

sunu bāyasa tair̥ sahaja sayānā. kāhē na māgasi asa baradānā. 2.

Lord Ram, the Lord of the Raghu’s line of kings of Ayodhya (*raghukulanāyaka*) gave his consent by saying “*ēvamastu*”, i.e. ‘so be it; it shall be as you desire’. Saying this, the Lord spoke words that were supremely pleasant and gave joy to Kaagbhusund. (1)

The Lord said, ‘Oh Crow (*bāyasa*); listen! You are very wise and intelligent; why then would you have not sought this blessing or blessing from me? [You could have opted for many other things, but you were wise to select Bhakti instead. Surely this proves you are wiser than most of others whom I have ever approached for fulfilling their wishes.]¹ (2)

[Note—¹Only a person who is exceptionally intelligent and wise would use the given opportunity most meaningfully. The Lord had offered so many boons to Kaagbhusund but the latter realised that they are all useless if he is not granted Bhakti. This is because Kaagbhusund knew that the quality of Bhakti is very dear to Lord Ram, and so he reasoned that by having Bhakti he would also endear himself to the Lord in a subtle way. And by the Lord’s own admission, Kaagbhusund succeeded in his plan.

In fact, Lord Ram had himself praised Bhakti when he went to Sabari’s hermitage during his forest sojourn. He had clearly told her that since she had it she

was very dear to him. To prove this point, the Lord had performed her last rites as if he was her son. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 34—to Doha no. 36.

Another instance similar to that of Kaagbhusund seeking the boon of Bhakti from Lord Ram is found when the seven celestial sages known as Sankadi had gone to pray and offer their obeisance to Lord Ram; they had also asked for the grant of Bhakti. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 35. Sankadi sages have also praised Bhakti while asking for this blessing.]

सब सुख खानि भगति तैं मागी । नहिं जग कोउ तोहि सम बड़भागी ॥ ३ ॥
जो मुनि कोटि जतन नहिं लहहीं । जे जप जोग अनल तन दहहीं ॥ ४ ॥

saba sukha khāni bhagati tair̥ māgī. nahir̥ jaga kō'u tōhi sama barābhāgī. 3.
jō muni kōṭi jatana nahir̥ lahaḥīr̥. jē japa jōga anala tana dahahīr̥. 4.

You have asked for the boon of having ‘Bhakti’ (devotion for Lord God) which is indeed a fountain or a mine of all sorts of bliss and happiness in life. Really, there is no one as lucky and fortunate (as well as wise) as you are¹. (3)

Bhakti is a boon that not even great sages and hermits usually get even after doing a lot of strenuous religious efforts such as doing constant Japa (i.e. repetition of the holy name of the Lord by restraining the mind from any other thought, something that is very difficult to practice), Yoga (meditation along with reflection and contemplation), and enduring other physical discomforts such as letting the body suffer by subjecting it to the heat of a raging fire during fire sacrifices or doing a form of Yoga known as Hata Yoga. (4)

[Note—¹People seek all sorts of worldly boons and temporal gifts if they are given a chance to ask for one. Some ask for wealth, some seek fame and powers, some want a son and prosperous family, and others want good health, success in endeavours, and so on. Some amongst them who are enlightened may ask for Mukti or Moksha, i.e. for liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation. But Mukti or Moksha comes only when one dies, and there may be many a sacrifices, meritorious deeds or strenuous efforts that one would have to make to achieve this noble goal while one is alive.

Not even great sages and hermits get this blessing even though they suffer so much to acquire spiritual merit. They are like an adult son for me, and like a mother is not too worried about her grown-up children as they are able to take care of themselves, I too am not unduly worried about the spiritual welfare of great sages, seers, hermits and ascetics because I know that their future is secure, that they would certainly get liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation based on the strength of their great sacrifices, penances, austerities, religious practices and spiritually meritorious deeds. But in case of those who seek Bhakti, I become especially concerned as they are like my infant children.

There are innumerable instances in Ram Charit Manas where the importance and significance of Bhakti has been highlighted. Some of instances are the following: (a) Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 45; (ii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 84; (iii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 79; (iv) Doha no. 122 along with Chaupai line nos. 7, 12-14 that precede it; (v) Chaupai

line nos. 1-10 that precede Doha no. 119; and (b) Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 4-10 that precede Doha no. 43.

It is rare that anyone would seek the virtue of ‘Bhakti’ or devotion for me inspite of my declaration that Bhakti is very dear to me—see the next Chaupai no. 5 herein below. The blessing of Bhakti helps the person to lead a high quality of life in this world that is marked by spiritual bliss, happiness and carefreeness even while he goes about the routine affairs of life in an ordinary way like his other peers because once he has Bhakti in him his welfare and good become my concern—for I treat a person who has Bhakti as a mother treats her child. I personally feel obliged to take care of all his needs and free him of all worries. He need not exert himself in making special efforts to lead an auspicious life or do meritorious deeds or perform strenuous religious rites in order to gain spiritual merit, for all spiritual rewards come to him automatically and without any discomfort.

Therefore, apart from living a happy, blissful and carefree life, a person who has Bhakti in him is assured of Mukti or Moksha at the time of his death. So he has the best of both the worlds—he enjoys a peaceful and happy life while he is alive, and at the same time he is assured of emancipation and salvation upon death. And both these rewards come to him without effort and worries.]

रीझेउँ देखि तोरि चतुराई । मागेहु भगति मोहि अति भाई ॥ ५ ॥
सुनु बिहंग प्रसाद अब मोरें । सब सुभ गुन बसिहहि उर तोरें ॥ ६ ॥

rījhē'um' dēkhi tōri caturā'ī. māgēhu bhagati mōhi ati bhā'ī. 5.
sunu bihaṅga prasāda aba mōrēm. saba subha guna basihahim ura tōrēm. 6.

I am truly pleased and enchanted by your sagacity and wisdom in that you have selected Bhakti as your blessing-of-choice, for Bhakti is also dear to me. [To wit, by asking for the blessing of Bhakti you have indirectly endeared yourself to me because Bhakti is liked by me as well. So by saying you would love to have Bhakti you have created a bond that is common between the two of us for I love Bhakti too. And this is why I am so amazed at your wisdom and cleverness for you have chosen something that would establish an eternal bond of love and affection between you and me.] (5)

Listen oh Bird (sunu bihaṅga)! By my blessings and grace, all the auspicious and noble qualities that exist in this world would now onwards reside in your heart. (6)

भगति ग्यान बिग्यान बिरागा । जोग चरित्र रहस्य बिभागा ॥ ७ ॥
जानब तैं सबही कर भेदा । मम प्रसाद नहिं साधन खेदा ॥ ८ ॥

bhagati gyāna bigyāna birāgā. jōga caritra rahasya bibhāgā. 7.
jānaba taim sabahī kara bhēdā. mama prasāda nahim sādhana khēdā. 8.

Bhakti (devotion), Gyan (spiritual wisdom and enlightenment), Vigyan (realisation of the self and cosmic Consciousness), Vairagya (true renunciation, dispassion, detachment etc.), Yoga (meditation), and the many secret aspects of my divine stories and forms with all their different connotations, --- (7)

--- The esoteric knowledge of all will be known to you easily. By my grace and blessings, you will not have to endure any hardship or encounter any sort of difficulty in understanding these profound secrets¹. (8)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precede Doha no. 114 where sage Lomus has blessed Kaagbhusund in a similar manner.]

दो०. माया संभव भ्रम सब अब न व्यापिहहिं तोहि ।

जानेसु ब्रह्म अनादि अज अगुन गुनाकर मोहि ॥ ८५ (क) ॥

dōhā.

māyā sambhava bhrama saba aba na byāpihahim tōhi.
jānēsu brahma anādi aja aguna gunākara mōhi. 85 (a).

Any kind of perplexity, doubt and confusion that owe their origin to Maya (delusions) would no longer affect you. [To wit, you will be free from their tainting and demeaning influences.]

Henceforth, realise that I (Lord Ram) is a personified form of the supreme Brahm who has no beginning, who is without a birth, and who has no attributes like other living beings, but at the same time who is a treasury of all the best of auspicious virtues that exist in this creation¹. (Doha no. 85-a)

[Note—¹It would seem, on the face of it, that it's like self-praise on the part of Lord Ram to call himself 'Brahm' and the 'Supreme Being'. Well, it is not that at all, as the Lord is merely reiterating what others, who themselves are knowledgeable, wise and enlightened, have said about the Lord.

Let us refer to some of these wise ones who have affirmed that Lord Ram is indeed the Supreme Being or Brahm himself. (i) Lord Shiva has told this fact to his consort Parvati in no uncertain terms, mincing no words to assert it—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-8 and Chanda line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 51; (ii) The creator Brahma had told his son sage Vasistha the same thing—refer: Ram Charit Mans, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 48; (iii) Sage Kaagbhusund told Garud this fact to remove all his doubts which had vexed him for long—refer: Ram Charit Mans, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 72—to Doha no. 73.

When Lord Ram returned victorious to Ayodhya after the campaign of Lanka and the term of fourteen years of forest dwelling ended, he was crowned the King of the realm. At that time all the senior Gods had come to pay their obeisance and offer their tributes to him. These Gods included Brahma the creator and Shiva the concluder, both of whom are the senior-most Gods as they are the two Gods of the Trinity, the third being Lord Vishnu himself who was present in the form of Lord Ram, as well as Indra who is the King of Gods. Then the Vedas, the primary scriptures, had also come in a personified form to pay their respects and pray to Lord Ram. These Gods and the Vedas would not have come to bow their heads and offer their respects to an ordinary human king or emperor no matter how powerful and renowned he may have been. Obviously therefore, the 'King' to whom they had come to pay their respects was clearly not a human being by any count. To wit, Lord Ram

was the Lord whom all the Gods and the Vedas praise and are junior to. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 12—to Doha no. 14.

There are numerous other instances as well in the Book “Ram Charit Manas” where this irrefutable fact is stressed. For instance, (i) Baal Kand, Doha no. 50; (ii) Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 126 along with Chanda line nos. 1-4 that precede it; (iii) Kishkindha Kand, Doha no. 26 to cite a few.]

मोहि भगत प्रिय संतत अस बिचारि सुनु काग ।

कायँ बचन मन मम पद करेसु अचल अनुराग ॥ ८५ (ख) ॥

mōhi bhagata priya santata asa bicāri sunu kāga.

kāyam^ṁ bacana mana mama pada karēsu acala anurāga. 85 (b).

Oh Crow, listen (sunu kāga)! Keep in mind that devotees are very dear to my heart, and with this understanding have eternal devotion and affection for my holy feet through your thoughts, words and deeds¹. (Doha no. 85-b)

[Note—¹Lord Ram advised Kaagbhusund: “My dear, always keep in mind two things: one, that I am the Supreme Being, and two, that I have special place for devotees in my heart. So firstly, never let doubts about my divinity and authenticity ever enter your mind as this would cause a lot of trouble for you and would also pull you down from the state of spiritual blessedness in which you find yourself at present. Secondly, have unflinching devotion for me in all your thoughts, in your words, in your actions—because this would ensure that you remain dear to me, and then taking care of you would be my responsibility.”

Later on Kaagbhusund was similarly blessed by sage Lomus as well as Lord Shiva. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Doha no. 113-a where Lomus has blessed him; and (ii) Chaupai line no. 10 that precedes Doha no. 109 where Lord Shiva has blessed him.

Refer also to Tulsidas’ book “Vairagya Sandipani”, verse no. 36 where an exact similar idea is stressed.]

चौ०. अब सुनु परम बिमल मम बानी । सत्य सुगम निगमादि बखानी ॥ १ ॥

निज सिद्धांत सुनावउँ तोही । सुनु मन धरु सब तजि भजु मोही ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

aba sunu parama bimala mama bānī. satya sugama nigamādi bakhānī. 1.

nija sid'dhānta sunāva'um^ṁ tōhī. sunu mana dharu saba taji bhaju mōhī. 2.

Lord Ram said to sage Kaagbhusund—‘Now, listen to my sacred (holy and divine) words or teachings which are truthful, easy to understand, and are in consonance with and echoing the eclectic principles laid out in the ancient scriptures such as the Vedas, the Purans etc. (‘nigamādi’)¹. (1)

I shall tell you the fundamental principles as concluded by me (i.e. as deduced, determined and decided by me, the Supreme Being who has created these scriptures,

and therefore what I say is the final word on the essential meaning of the teachings of the scriptures).

Listen carefully and enshrine them in your heart and mind. Discard everything else, and worship me, have unwavering devotion for me, be dedicated to me, and inculcate faith and love for me (as a sure-shot means for your spiritual well-being, welfare and good)². (2)

[Note—¹Lord Ram is a personified form of the Supreme Being, and hence his words can't be anything other than holy, divine, sacred and truthful.

The scriptures are very voluminous, complicated and labyrinthine; highly erudite and learned sages and seers have spent their entire lifetimes trying to read them fully, understand them and decipher their teachings. They are thus beyond the means and reach and understanding and practical use for the ordinary creature. This problem was realised by the Supreme Lord, so he decided to make them easy to understand for the common person and present their essential teachings in simple and straightforward language.

²To wit, always remember what I tell you now. Imprint my sacred words firmly and indelibly in your sub-conscious. Make a firm resolution that they will invariably act as your moral guide, advisor and teacher in all the decisions your mind and heart make while dealing with all imaginable and all the variable aspects of life. If you follow me closely and implement my teachings, you will not have to look any further for spiritual and moral guidance and advice.]

मम माया संभव संसारा । जीव चराचर बिबिधि प्रकारा ॥ ३ ॥

सब मम प्रिय सब मम उपजाए । सब ते अधिक मनुज मोहि भाए ॥ ४ ॥

mama māyā sambhava sansārā. jīva carācara bibidhi prakārā. 3.

saba mama priya saba mama upajā'ē. saba tē adhika manuja mōhi bhā'ē. 4.

This creation is the result of my Maya (delusion creating powers). This creation has countless varieties of Jivas (living beings), such as those that are mobile ('Char') and those that are immobile ('Achar')¹. (3)

All of them are equally dear to me, and all of them have been created by me (or born out of me as my image). But out of all of them, those who are born as human beings are comparatively dearer to me². (4)

[Note—¹This creation is created by the supreme Brahm using his delusion-creating powers. For this purpose, Brahm has employed three basic Gunas or qualities in creation—the Sata Guna, the Raja Guna, and the Tama Guna. Hence, this Maya is also known as 'Trigunmai Maya' or a Maya that has three-components. This esoteric concept has been explained in a note that accompanies Doha no. 41 of Uttar Kand above.

The living world has both types of living beings—those who can move, for instance the members of the animal kingdom who are studied under the zoological stream in modern science, and those who can't move, such as the members of the plant kingdom who are studied under the botanical stream.

²This idea has been reiterated elsewhere by Lord Ram—viz. Ram Charit Manas: (i) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 43 when the Lord had taught the citizens of Ayodhya he has said exactly the same thing. (ii) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 87 where Lord Ram reasserts this fact to sage Kaagbhusund as stated in the present line.

Why so? This question has been answered by Kaagbhusund himself in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 9-12 that precede Doha no. 121. He tells Garud (the mount of Lord Vishnu who had come seeking knowledge to the saint) that—“There is no other form (body) that is as good and desirable as the body of the human being. All the creatures of this world consisting of inanimate as well as animate things yearn to acquire it. The human body is the stepping stone to attain both the heaven as well as the hell. It is also the mean by which a creature can hope to find his final liberation and deliverance from the cycle of transmigration in this world. It also grants Gyan, Vairagya and Bhakti. {That is, the Jiva can obtain these three fruits of truthful spiritual knowledge as enshrined in the scriptures, practice the eclectic virtues of renunciation, detachment and dispassion, as well as devotion, dedication and submission for the Lord God through the medium of the human body.} If a Jiva is stupid enough not to properly use this golden opportunity to worship the Supreme Being and have devotion for the Lord to ensure their secure destiny and spiritual well-being then they are like the idiot who throws as precious gem to grab a worthless piece of glass.”

Lord Ram has told Hanuman that though he is neutral towards all in this creation, but still he has a soft corner for his devotees—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 4.]

तिन्ह महँ द्विज द्विज महँ श्रुतिधारी । तिन्ह महँ निगम धरम अनुसारि ॥ ५ ॥
तिन्ह महँ प्रिय बिरक्त पुनि ग्यानी । ग्यानिहु ते अति प्रिय बिग्यानी ॥ ६ ॥

tinha maham̐ dvija dvija maham̐ śrutidhārī. tinha mahum̐ nigama dharama anusārī. 5.

tinha maham̐ priya birakta puni gyānī. gyāniḥu tē ati priya bigyānī. 6.

{All humans are not the same; some are naturally good and righteous, while others are vile and sinful. So the Lord obviously does not mean that he loves even sinners and vile persons simply because they are ‘humans’. Its nonsense and incredulous to believe it to be so! So he clarifies his position and elaborates further—}

Amongst the humans, I favour and hold dear the Dwijs (Brahmins). Even amongst them I favour and hold dear those who are expert in the knowledge of the Vedas.

Out of them, those who practice the teaching of these sacred scriptures in their own lives, those who lead a life according to the tenets of Dharma (principles of righteousness, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, morality, spirituality etc. as universally taught by all the scriptures), are more favoured by me and dearer to me¹.

[¹To wit, though all elderly and learned Brahmins are favoured by me, but I prefer those who have an in-depth understanding of the essential meaning and teaching of the scriptures, who implement these teachings in their own lives, who are competent and selfless enough to show the rest of the society the path of Dharma by

teaching others their essence in a simple language, and in general act as torch-bearers of the sacred knowledge enshrined in the scriptures. I do not mean that I prefer any Brahmin because he is born in that race. Learning the scriptures does not mean memorizing them by rote-learning because it this sort of learning is as good as not knowing the scriptures at all. When I mean by saying ‘I respect and honour Brahmins’ I mean those amongst the Brahmins who are wise, learned and self-realised, those who exercise exemplary self-control over their sense organs, thoughts and words, those who practice in their personal lives what they preach or teach others about the scriptures, those who are sincere, honest, truthful and trustworthy, and those whose lives are worthy of emulation.] (5)

Out of them (i.e. those who have studied the scriptures and have an in-depth knowledge of their meaning), I prefer those who are ‘Virakta’—i.e. those who have developed the eclectic spiritual virtue of ‘Vairagya’. That is, I prefer those people amongst the learned Brahmins who have developed a sincere and honest sense of renunciation, detachment, dispassion and neutrality towards everything in the world, including their own gross body and its countless pleasures, as well as the external world of material sense objects and their infinite temptations².

[²What is the use of understanding the meaning of the scriptures if a man remains hankering for worldly gains and pecuniary benefits from the material world and its sense objects? The scriptures tell him, inter alia, that everything in this world is perishable, that the only imperishable entity here is the Atma, the pure consciousness trapped in a gross body due to its past deeds, that true happiness and peace comes when this Atma is freed from this tangle, and that the world is like a spider’s web which keeps the Atma trapped like the insect caught in this web and fed upon by the spider. The learned Brahmin preaches others this fact but himself yearns for all the things that the scriptures prohibit and which he himself tells other from a pseudo moral ground. Indeed he is a pretentious man, and therefore the Lord does not like him.]

Even amongst the Viraktas, I prefer those who are ‘Gyanis’—i.e. who are wise, and have become enlightened and self-realised³.

[³Only those who have developed true realisation and enlightenment will be able to remain steady on the path of Vairagya or Virakti. The rest are prone to falter and fall by the wayside in the face of fierce and relentless onslaught of the world and its temptations.] (6)

तिन्ह ते पुनि मोहि प्रिय निज दासा । जेहि गति मोरि न दूसरि आसा ॥ ७ ॥

पुनि पुनि सत्य कहउँ तोहि पाहीं । मोहि सेवक सम प्रिय कोउ नाहीं ॥ ८ ॥

tinha tē puni mōhi priya nija dāsā. jēhi gati mōri na dūsari āsā. 7.

puni puni satya kaha'um' tōhi pāhīm. mōhi sēvaka sama priya kō'u nāhīm. 8.

{Having stressed the importance of Viragya and Gyan in the path of spiritual destiny, the Lord now lays stress on the virtue and glory of Bhakti, the eclectic virtues of devotion, dedication, submission, faith and love for the Lord God by saying that out of all the learned, wise and enlightened ones, he prefers those who have become his true followers, who serve the Lord selflessly and sincerely.}

Out of them (i.e. out of those who are Gyanis as mentioned in Chaupai line no. 6 above), I prefer those who serve me, for whom there is no other succour and solace, no other destiny and destination, and no other hope and help except me.

[To wit, I have a special soft corner in my heart for those wise ones who are completely and unequivocally dependent upon me, and have submitted themselves whole-heartedly before me.]¹ (7)

[In this Chaupai, the Lord repeats his declaration that he loves his devotees over all others to remove any confusions and doubts, as well as to stress this point.]

I repeatedly and truthfully (honestly, sincerely) say to you that no one is as dear to me as my devotee and those who serve me². (8)

[Note—¹The same emotion is expressed by Lord Ram when Vibhishan, the brother of the demon king Ravana, had come to seek the Lord's refuge and protection—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 48 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it. Here, Lord Ram has especially invoked Kaagbhusund to say that anyone who comes seeking his refuge after abandoning all hopes from any other quarter, then he is hereby assured by the Lord that he is most welcome—refer especially to Chaupai line no. 1 in the above cited verses.

Sage Valmiki has also reiterated this virtue of total submission, faith, devotion and love for Lord Ram, being completely dependent upon the Lord for all the needs, both the spiritual as well as the temporal, and having no expectations of any kind from any other quarter in this world as a pre-requisite for the Lord being especially gracious upon a spiritual aspirant—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Doha no. 129 along with Chaupai line nos. 4-6 that precede it; (ii) Doha no. 130; (iii) Doha no. 131.

In Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 46 where Lord Ram tells the citizens of Ayodhya that if a person claims to be his follower and dependant but looks elsewhere for help, say obviously then how he can claim it to be so: he is a liar, a pretentious man who is not telling the truth. Then the Lord asserts that he is easily pleased and feel obliged to a person who is really dependent upon him completely.

²The Lord has made a similar assertion earlier when the citizens had assembled to hear him—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 43.

Now, this statement of Lord Ram that he gives special preference to those who serve him, must not be misconstrued to mean that he is acting arrogantly and preaching slavery. Not at all! Remember, he has reiterated in an open court when all the citizens had assembled to hear him that they should have no fear of him and are free to oppose him if they think that the Lord is saying anything wrong, improper, unholy or unrighteous—i.e. anything that goes against the principles of Dharma and the doctrines and teachings of the scriptures {refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 43}, that after listening to him there are free to decide what to do and what not to do {refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 43}, and that all of them are like his brothers {refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (a) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 43; (b) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 45; and (c) Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 46}.]

भगति हीन बिरंचि किन होई । सब जीवहु सम प्रिय मोहि सोई ॥ ९ ॥
 भगतिवंत अति नीचउ प्राणी । मोहि प्रानप्रिय असि मम बानी ॥ १० ॥

bhagati hīna biran̄ci kina hō'ī. saba jīvahu sama priya mōhi sō'ī. 9.
 bhagativanta ati nīca'u prānī. mōhi prānapriya asi mama bānī. 10.

[Laying more stress of the grand virtue of Bhakti, the Lord continues—]

Even if someone as exalted and senior in creation as the creator Brahma himself lacks the divine virtue of Bhakti in him, then he is like all other ordinary Jivas (living beings) for me.

[To wit, even Brahma, the creator, is like other ordinary beings for me if he lacks devotion and faith in me. I will continue to love him and take care of him in the routine way I take care and look after the rest of the creation, but he cannot expect me to show any special privilege to him or come to his rescue when he is surrounded by horrendous misfortunes howling like hungry bloodhounds baying for his blood.]¹ (9)

I tell you truthfully that if a creature has devotion for me and complete faith in me, then I love him like my life even though he may be most lowly and downtrodden in the hierarchy of creation². (10)

[Note—¹Compare this line with the previous Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 86 of Uttar Kand in Ram Charit Manas. This comparison clearly indicate what the Lord means to say—it is that he takes care of the entire creation in a dispassionate manner like an emperor should without any prejudice or a partisan attitude. But like the emperor who is more concerned about those who attend to him closely, I too, being the Supreme Emperor, cannot neglect those who have complete devotion for me, who serve me diligently, faithfully and whole-heartedly. It does not mean I am biased; but tell me would it not be unfair to them if I do not give them any privilege or advantage over others who are not so loyal to me and who keep a distance from me. Remember—I won't neglect them; don't misunderstand me. I am duty-bound to take care of all of them—I have vowed it (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, line no. 1 of Doha no. 7; and Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 86).

This idea that even if one has the body as exalted and honourable as the creator Brahma himself, it is of no use if the person does not have Bhakti or devotion for Lord Ram is reiterated by Kaagbhusund once again in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 96 where precisely the same thing is said.

²This is an important observation. All those who were fortunate enough to be graced by Lord Ram in the story of the Ramayana were low down in social and evolutionary hierarchy. Let us see who they are—

(i) The vulture Jatayu who was picked up the Lord onto his laps and his last rites (cremation) was done by the Lord himself—something his own father king Dasrath was denied—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, (i) Doha no. 30 to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 32; (ii) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 33.

(ii) Then there was Sabari, a woman who was born in a low caste and excommunicated by the society. The Lord cheerfully ate fruits offered by her, preached her, and then gave her emancipation and salvation—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no.36. Here also, when she expressed her dilemma and extreme sense of regret that she is feeling reluctant or afraid to serve the Lord as she belonged to a low caste which forbids such service, and this will prevent her from fulfilling her life-long desire to serve the Lord when he arrived at her hermitage, the Lord told her that he respects only Bhakti as the only condition to accept anyone, and since she has this in abundance he is most willing to accept her hospitality—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 35; and Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 36.

(iii) Nishad was a boatman, but the Lord accepted him as his friend—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 104; Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 20.

(iv) Other shining examples are the monkeys such as Sugriv, the monkey king, whom also the Lord accepted as his friend—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, (i) Doha no. 4; (ii) Doha no. 5 along with Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes it.

Then we have Hanuman, his most trusted devotee whom the Lord had affectionately embraced on more than one occasion—refer: Ram Charit Manas, (i) Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 4; (ii) Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 33; and (iii) Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 62.

Lord Ram has proclaimed that Hanuman was dearer to him as compared to even his closest brother Laxman who had suffered the torments of the forest along with the Lord shoulder-to-shoulder—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 3.

Hanuman had risen above the rest of them all to the exalted stature in as much as that the Lord declared him to be his son towards whom he will always be indebted—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-7 that precede Doha no. 32.

(v) Vibhishan, the demon brother of Ravana, the demon king, was also accepted by the Lord as his friend whom the Lord embraced affectionately—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 46, (ii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 48, (ii) Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 49, etc.

Not privately, but the Lord had declared them to be his dear friends without whose support he would not have defeated the fierce enemy, the demons, openly before the huge crowd that had gathered to greet and welcome Lord Ram when he returned to Ayodhya—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 5-8 that precede Doha no. 8.]

{Note—The summary of what the Lord said till now is this--“All the creatures in this world have been created by me (the Supreme Being known as Ram). I love them equally as all of them are my off-springs. Out of them, I love the humans more. Out of them, I prefer Dwij (Brahmins); out of them I prefer those who are well versed in the Vedas; out of such Brahmins I prefer those who actually follow the teachings of the Vedas (instead of just muttering their hymns and incantations); out of such Brahmins

I prefer those who have developed Vairagya or renunciation and dispassion; out of them I prefer those who have gained 'Gyan' (knowledge of spiritual matters and having wisdom); out of such people I prefer those who have 'Vigyan' (an in-depth clinical knowledge of spiritual matters, leading to self-realisation and enlightenment); and out of them I prefer those who are my ardent followers and are totally dependent upon me, for whom I am the only destination and refuge, the only source of succour and solace, and the only source of help and happiness. Even Brahma, the creator, is equal to an ordinary being for me if he has no Bhakti (devotion), while the humblest and lowly of all the creatures is dearest to me and closest to my heart if he has Bhakti in him."}

दो०. सुचि सुसील सेवक सुमति प्रिय कहु काहि न लाग ।
श्रुति पुरान कह नीति असि सावधान सुनु काग ॥ ८६ ॥

dōhā.

suci susīla sēvaka sumati priya kahu kāhi na lāga.
śruti purāna kaha nīti asi sāvadhāna sunu kāga. 86.

Say, who does not like or favours a server or follower or subordinate who is of a pure heart, who is polite and courteous, and who is wise and intelligent.

[Lord Ram here justifies his earlier assertion that he has special place in his heart for his ardent devotees and followers. He puts a poser to those who may question the Lord's declaration—saying in essence "Tell me, what would you do if you were in my place? How do you intend to treat someone who is loyal, faithful and totally devoted to you; who will lay down his life for you or your cause; who is completely dependent upon you?"]

Listen attentively oh Crow ("sāvadhāna sunu kāga")! All the great scriptures, such as the Vedas and the Purans, affirm this principle (which I have just narrated to you). (Doha no. 86)

चौ०. एक पिता के बिपुल कुमारा । होहिं पृथक गुन सील अचारा ॥ १ ॥
कोउ पंडित कोउ तापस ग्याता । कोउ धनवंत सूर कोउ दाता ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

ēka pitā kē bipula kumārā. hōhiṃ pṛthaka guna sīla acārā. 1.
kō'u paṇḍita kō'u tāpasa gyātā. kō'u dhanavanta sūra kō'u dātā. 2.

{Now, the Lord takes a simple example to bring home the point why he favours his ardent and faithful devotees as compared to other creatures inspite of the fact that all of them are his off-springs—}

Suppose a father has many sons. All of them have different qualifications and qualities, differing in nature, virtues, behaviour and attitude. (1)

One of them may be a Pandit (an expert in any vocation or profession or knowledge of the scriptures), another may be good at doing Tapa (practicing the principles of austerity, penance and suffering for some good cause), the third may be rich, the

fourth may be physically strong and a brave warrior, and the fifth may be a renowned philanthropic who is known for his charitable disposition and a magnanimous attitude as a liberal donor and alms giver. (2)

कोउ सर्बग्य धर्मरत कोई । सब पर पितहि प्रीति सम होई ॥ ३ ॥

कोउ पितु भगत बचन मन कर्मा । सपनेहुँ जान न दूसर धर्मा ॥ ४ ॥

kō'u sarbagya dharmarata kō'ī. saba para pitahi prīti sama hō'ī. 3.
kō'u pitu bhagata bacana mana karmā. sapanēhum' jāna na dūsara dharmā.
4.

One of his sons may be so mystically empowered and powerful that nothing is secret from him or unknown to him. The other son may be exalted as he diligently follows the principles of Dharma.

The father will love all of them equally and treat all of them equally. All of them have auspicious qualities that give good name to the father and the family. The father is happy with all of them, and blesses all of them. (3)

Now, suppose he has a son who is completely devoted to his father so much so that he serves him with his words, actions and deeds. This particular son knows of no other Dharma (good deed) that is greater or better than serving his father loyally, faithfully, diligently, truthfully, sincerely, honestly, and exclusively.

[To wit, this son is exceptionally obedient to his father. He treats his father as being equivalent to God. He is at the beck and call of the father, and is eagerly waiting for the father to ask him to do something which he willingly rushes to do to the best of his ability. He never murmurs or swears or grudges or tries to avoid attending to the needs of his beloved father. He does never use any word that might hurt his father in the least; he is eager to carry out his instructions cheerfully; he thinks that he is serving his Lord God by serving the father.] (4)

सो सुत प्रिय पितु प्रान समाना । जद्यपि सो सब भाँति अयाना ॥ ५ ॥

एहि बिधि जीव चराचर जेते । त्रिजग देव नर असुर समेते ॥ ६ ॥

अखिल बिस्व यह मोर उपाया । सब पर मोहि बराबरि दाया ॥ ७ ॥

तिन्ह महुँ जो परिहरि मद माया । भजै मोहि मन बच अरु काया ॥ ८ ॥

sō suta priya pitu prāna samānā. jadyapi sō saba bhām'ti ayānā. 5.
ēhi bidhi jīva carācara jētē. trijaga dēva nara asura samētē. 6.
akhila bisva yaha mōra upāyā. saba para mōhi barābari dāyā. 7.
tinha maham' jō parihari mada māyā. bhajai mōhi mana baca aru kāyā. 8.

This particular son is exceedingly dear to the father even though he might lack in other qualities enumerated above (in Chaupai line nos. 1-3).

[Say, will he not be the most favoured son of the father; should the father not love him most dearly?] (5)

In a similar way, this entire creation consisting of animate as well as inanimate creatures—including the animals and birds ('Trijag'), the gods ('Deva'), the humans ('Nar) and the demons ('Asur') [6]—has been created by me; all of them are my off-springs. I have equal mercy and grace upon all of them [7]¹. (6-7).

Amongst all the creatures, they who abandon all sorts of negativity such as Mada (arrogance, haughtiness and ego) as well as Maya (delusions and their attendant deceit, pretensions and falsehoods), and instead develop the spiritual virtue of having sincere and true devotion, love, affection and faith in me—(8)

[Note—¹Refer the same declaration of the Lord earlier in Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 86 herein above.]

दो०. पुरुष नपुंसक नारि वा जीव चराचर कोइ ।
सर्व भाव भज कपट तजि मोहि परम प्रिय सोइ ॥ ८७ (क) ॥
dōhā.

puruṣa napuṣṣaka nāri vā jīva carācara kō'i.
sarba bhāva bhaja kapaṭa taji mōhi parama priya sō'i. 87 (a).

—Verily I declare that no matter which form of birth they have got in this world, to whichever denomination in the hierarchy of creation they belong, be it as a man, an impotent person, a woman, or any other Jiva (creature), whether one who has mobility (such as animals and birds) or one who can't move (such as plants or lower members of the animal kingdom)—I love them most dearly if they have no wickedness, pretensions or deceit in their mind and heart, and honestly worship me with utmost faith, are truly dedicated to me, and have an unflinching and single-minded devotion for me¹. (Doha no. 87 Ka).

[Note—¹The importance of Bhakti has been highlighted to the citizens of Ayodhya by Lord Ram himself in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 45. In Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precedes Doha no. 46, the Lord reiterates that a true devotee is one who relies exclusively upon Lord Ram for all his needs, whether they pertain to his worldly needs or to his spiritual needs.]

सो०. सत्य कहउँ खग तोहि सुचि सेवक मम प्रानप्रिय ।
अस बिचारि भजु मोहि परिहरि आस भरोस सब ॥ ८७ (ख) ॥
sōraṭhā.

satya kaha'um' khaga tōhi suci sēvaka mama prānapriya.
asa bicāri bhaju mōhi parihari āsa bharōsa saba. 87 (b).

Oh Bird (khaga)! I tell you truly and in all sincerity that a devoted servant (i.e. a follower or devotee) who is honest and pure in heart and mind is very dear to me; I love him like one loves one's own life.

Hence, keeping this in mind you should abandon all other hopes and reliance upon anyone else or any other means for your welfare, and instead always worship me, revere me, and have unwavering devotion for and faith in me¹ (bhaju mōhi).

[Remember: If you are honest and truthful in your faith and devotion for me, if you sincerely love me and have affection for me without pretensions, then be sure I will go out of my way and a step further than you to reciprocate your emotions and sentiments. I will take full care of your well-being and welfare in all its respects, both from the temporal point of view as well as from the spiritual angle. I will be responsible for you; I will take care of you like a parent takes care of his or her innocent child.] (Sortha no. 87-b)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 46 where Lord Ram has told a similar thing to the citizens of Ayodhya.]

चौ०. कबहूँ काल न व्यापिहि तोही । सुमिरेसु भजेसु निरंतर मोही ॥ १ ॥

प्रभु बचनामृत सुनि न अघाऊँ । तनु पुलकित मन अति हरषाऊँ ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

kabahūṁ kāla na byāpihi tōhī. sumirēsu bhajēsu nirantara mōhī. 1.
prabhu bacanāmṛta suni na aghā'ūṁ. tanu pulakita mana ati haraṣā'ūṁ. 2.

[Lord Ram reiterated once again—] You will always remain immune to the effects of Kaal (time)¹.

[To wit, you will have an eternal life; you will become immortal. But however, there is a caveat here. What is it?]

Always remember me (Lord Ram), worship me, and have faith in and devotion for me (sumirēsu bhajēsu nirantara mōhī).², (1)

I was so overwhelmed with joy and bliss that I never felt contented or satiated by hearing the Lord's nectar-like sweet words that filled me with ecstasy so much so that my body was extremely thrilled and hairs on it stood on their ends. (2)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 114 where sage Lomus has blessed Kaagbhusund in a similar manner.

²In this context, refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 57; (ii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 94; (iii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 96; (iv) Chaupai line no. 10 that precedes Doha no. 109; and (v) Doha no. 113-a.

Lord Ram blessed Kaagbhusund that the factor of 'time' will have no effect on him. From the physical perspective of existence in this gross world it would mean that he will never become old or his mental faculties would not be subjected to the ravages of time like other ordinary living beings; he would remain mentally agile and intelligent forever. To wit, Lord Ram blessed the crow-saint with eternity and imperishability.

But the Lord laid down a condition. What was it? Kaagbhusund is required to focus his mind and heart on Lord Ram by remembering him at all moments of his life; he is to revere the Lord, to worship him, to have deep devotion for him, and to have

an unwavering faith in the Lord without fail. This would mean that the crow-sage was to renounce his attachment with and attraction for everything pertaining to the gross physical world and its sense objects; he was to exercise exemplary self-control over his sense organs, and always remain in a state of meditation where his attention is focussed on Lord Ram.

Now, the next question is: if Kaagbhusund follows the instructions of Lord Ram, how would he become immortal and attain eternity in actual sense; what does this imply? The answer is to be found in metaphysical philosophy. It means that when Kaagbhusund focuses his attention on Lord Ram and remembers the Lord always, he would be living in a perpetual state of meditation where his awareness of existence would rise above the gross world and abide in a transcendental plane, where he would identify himself with the pure super consciousness instead of the gross body. In other words, he would live in a state of Samadhi or a state of transcendental existence which is attained in higher stages of Yoga or meditation. In metaphysics, it is called the 'Turiyateet State'.

Very briefly, the 'consciousness' exists in different levels or planes as follows: (i) The Jagrat State or the 'waking state' where it relates to the gross body and the physical world; the (ii) The Swapna State or the 'dreaming state' where it withdraws from the gross body and the world but still has feelings and emotions albeit at a subtler level; (iii) The Sushupta State or the 'post-dreaming state' where it goes beyond the world of dreams and feels nothing; this state gives true rest and bliss to the Atma as there is no disturbance. From this stage, the consciousness can either revert back to the former two stages or rise higher to the next state which is called (iv) The Turiya State or the 'transcendental state of existence of the Atma' when it crosses the threshold of gross existence by remaining perpetually in a state of bliss. When this state becomes established firmly, it is said to be the (v) 'Turiyateet State'—the state of pure consciousness which is virtually irreversible. When a person reaches this eclectic state of bliss, felicity and beatitude, he may appear to be awake in the physical world in the ordinary sense of the word, but actually his mind is focussed somewhere else; it is perpetually submerged in the nectar of bliss that comes with realisation of the Atma or the pure Consciousness. He will not be aware of his physical body, of its pains or comforts. Even if his body is subjected to sufferings, he will not feel it as he is not even aware of the body's existence. This state is equivalent to being in a state of trance known as Samadhi.

We have already read that Lord Ram is a personified form of Brahm, i.e. he is a personified form of Super Cosmic Consciousness—refer Doha no. 85-a. This Consciousness is also known as the Atma or the Soul as it is the essence of life in this creation; nothing that has no Atma has any relevance as far as a living world is concerned, for that which has no Atma in it is as good as dead. Remembering Lord Ram constantly means being focussed on the Atma which is pure consciousness as well as one's 'true self', one's 'true identity'. The gross body of a creature is not his true self or identity at all. This realisation would make Kaagbhusund detached from his gross physical body.

So, Kaagbhusund is expected to become self-realised and enlightened by remaining focussed on his Atma by way of constantly remembering Lord Ram, who is the cosmic Atma. He would experience the cosmic Atma in the form of Lord Ram as being present in his own innerself as his individual Atma.

Now, since the Atma or the pure consciousness is an eternal, infinite and imperishable entity as opposed to the gross physical body of a creature that is mortal and subject to decay and death, once Kaagbhusund begins to identify himself with the

Atma instead of the gross body, he too would become eternal and infinite like the Atma itself.

By the blessing and grace of Lord Ram, Kaagbhusund would attain the perpetual state of transcendental existence known as Samadhi wherein he would live like an ordinary creature in this world, going about the affairs his daily routine life in this gross world at the physical level, but remaining indifferent to it at the mental and emotional level as his mind and its attention would entirely be focussed elsewhere—i.e. his attention would be focussed on his Atma and away from the gross world even though he would be going about the daily grind of life in an ordinary way. This in turn would make him live in a perpetual state of bliss and beatitude inspite of being surrounded by the humdrum affairs of life.

Apart from this, when the time comes for him to discard his physical body that is governed by the laws of Nature, i.e. it is mortal, it becomes old and would have to die one day, he would still remain blissful in the realisation that his ‘true self’ is not his body but is his Atma which is eternal, infinite and imperishable.

In practical terms what Lord Ram says would mean that while alive Kaagbhusund will live a pious and spiritual life spent in singing the glories of the Lord and remaining submerged in the divine thoughts of the Lord that would bestow upon him extreme blissfulness and happiness, as he would be unconcerned about his gross mortal body but be focussed on his pure and eternal ‘self’ in the form of his Atma that in turn represents Lord Ram. This would mean that the Lord dwells inside Kaagbhusund’s inner-self and nowhere outside, bringing the Lord so close to the saintly Crow that no distinction would exist between the two of them!

This eclectic knowledge would make Kaagbhusund ecstatic with spiritual joy in a permanent way, and he would realise that this joy is so profound and astounding that all the comforts and pleasures of the material world and its sense objects taken together are no match for it by any measure.

Thus, since he would be self-realised and enlightened, he would have tasted the sense of blessedness, the feeling of ecstasy and beatitude that comes with the realisation that the Supreme Lord resides in one’s own inner-self as the Atma. So when the time comes, he would cheerfully abandon his present gross physical body when it becomes old and worn out, as is its wont according to the law of Nature, because he would have realised that the body does not belong to him. He would know that his Atma is his ‘real self’, and it is eternal and infinite unlike the body.

Therefore, Kaagbhusund’s ‘real self’ in the form of his Atma would abandon the present gross body and assume another physical body, and this process of creation and destruction would go on and on without really causing any mental or emotional distraction or disturbance to him.

This in essence is what Lord Ram means when he advises Kaagbhusund that if he remains steady in his devotion for the Lord, ‘time’ would not affect him, that he would be immune to its effects.]

सो सुख जानइ मन अरु काना । नहिं रसना पहिं जाइ बखाना ॥ ३ ॥

प्रभु सोभा सुख जानहिं नयना । कहि किमि सकहिं तिन्हहि नहिं बयना ॥ ४ ॥

sō sukha jāna'i mana aru kānā. nahim rasanā pahim jā'i bakhānā. 3.
prabhu sōbhā sukha jānahim nayanā. kahi kimi sakahim tinhaahi nahim

bayānā.4.

The level of bliss and joy that I had experienced at that time are known by my Mana (mind and heart) and ears which had heard the sweet words of the Lord. It is not possible now for the tongue and its power of expression to describe that ecstatic feeling. (3)

Only the eyes know the sense of blessedness and bliss that it enjoyed while observing the beautiful form of the Lord (Sri Ram as a child), but how can it describe it as it lacks the power of speech to express its feelings¹. (4)

[Note—¹A similar idea is expressed in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 229 when the friends of Sita had expressed their inability to describe the beauty of Lord Ram and his brother Laxman because “the tongue has no eyes, and the eyes have no tongue”.]

बहु बिधि मोहि प्रबोधि सुख देई । लगे करन सिसु कौतुक तेई ॥ ५ ॥
सजल नयन कछु मुख करि रूखा । चितइ मातु लागी अति भूखा ॥ ६ ॥

bahu bidhi mōhi prabōdhi sukha dē'ī. lagē karana sisu kautuka tē'ī. 5.
sajala nayana kachu mukha kari rūkhā. cita'ī mātu lāgī ati bhūkhā. 6.

After having advised me in manifold ways and gladdening my heart by giving me immense joy, the Lord resumed his childish activities as before. (5)

Filling his eyes with tears and making his face gloomy, he glanced at his mother (Kaushalya) to indicate to her that he was very hungry. (8)

देखि मातु आतुर उठि धाई । कहि मृदु बचन लिए उर लाई ॥ ७ ॥
गोद राखि कराव पय पाना । रघुपति चरित ललित कर गाना ॥ ८ ॥

dēkhi mātu ātura uṭhi dhā'ī. kahi mṛdu bacana li'ē ura lā'ī. 7.
gōda rākhi karāva paya pānā. raghupati carita lalita kara gānā. 8.

When the mother saw him, she got up immediately and ran towards him in haste. She picked him while uttering some sweet words, and affectionately clasped him to her bosom. (7)

She placed the child on her lap and began feeding him milk (i.e. suckle him), all the while singing pleasantly about his many childish plays. (8)

[Note—In Tulsidas' book “Geetawali”, Baal Kand, a vivid description is given of the affectionate way Lord Ram as a child had interacted with his mother Kaushalya. Refer: verse no. 7 where a similar incident of the Lord lying in the mother's lap and drinking milk has been narrated. Other wonderful verses of Geetawali that describe the love of mother Kaushalya for Lord Ram as a child are Baal Kand, verse nos. 18—

24 where the scene of the Lord lying in the cradle and the mother softly singing songs as she slowly swings it to and fro have been beautifully described.

The scene of child Lord Ram playing in the courtyard has been narrated with exceptional aplomb in Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse nos. 25—35.]

सो०. जेहि सुख लागि पुरारि असुभ बेष कृत सिव सुखद ।
 अवधपुरी नर नारि तेहि सुख महुँ संतत मगन ॥ ८८ (क) ॥
 sōraṭhā.

jēhi sukha lāgi purāri asubha bēṣa kṛta siva sukhada.
 avadhapurī nara nāri tēhi sukha mahum̐ santata magana. 88 (a).

That attainment of sublime bliss and spiritual ecstasy for which Lord Shiva, who himself is a bestower of peace, bliss and happiness to all and is a personified form of these eclectic virtues himself, had assumed a most unholy attire (by wearing a garland of skulls, wrapping serpents and smearing ash on his body, and being naked with only a tiger-skin as a loin-cloth)¹—that same mystical sense of beatitude and bliss was experienced by the citizens of Ayodhya, both the males and the females, as they always remained submerged in it². (Sortha no. 88-a)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 26; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 92; (iii) Doha no. 106 along with Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede it.

Lord Shiva is the Great Lord God of ascetics; he is a great Renouncer and the most enlightened, realised and wise of all the Gods. He keeps this form to indicate that he is not at all interested in the gross world and its physical attractions. He remains perpetually submerged in contemplation, reflection and meditation and its attendant sense of bliss and ecstasy, having no time or interest to bother about how he looks and what the world would think of him.

Besides this, when Lord Ram comes to this world and becomes a child, Lord Shiva too goes to Ayodhya in disguise to meet his revered Lord, like the case of sage Kaagbhusund also visiting the Lord disguised as an ordinary bird. This fact has been explicitly stated by Lord Shiva himself in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 3-6 that precede Doha no. 196.

However, Shiva goes disguised as a great soothsayer or a fortune-teller who is invited by the parents of the child Lord Ram to tell them something about their son.

The unseemly attire of Shiva makes the child Ram exceedingly happy, and he pokes fun at Shiva, laughs heartily and becomes ecstatic, giggling, crackling and chuckling merrily at the funny appearance of the visitor. This behaviour of Lord Ram makes Shiva himself thrilled and ecstatic with joy unbound. So he purposely assumes the most funniest of attires so as to tickle the funny-bone of his revered Lord Ram, throwing the entire household in peels of laughter and drenches them in the nectar of happiness and merriment.

In this context, refer “Geetawali”, Baal Kand, verse no. 17 which describes one such incident of Shiva’s visit.

Another primary reason of Shiva exhibiting an unusual form that the world normally would regard as unholy is to ensure that he is left alone to meditate, as no one would like to go near anyone who appears so ridiculous and odd like Shiva does

from his external appearances. The favour-seekers and boon-seekers would generally shun such a god, leaving Shiva alone at peace with himself.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1 and 7 that precede Doha no. 200; (ii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 203; (iii) Doha no. 204.]

सोई सुख लवलेस जिन्ह बारक सपनेहुँ लहेउ ।

ते नहिं गनहिं खगेस ब्रह्मसुखहि सज्जन सुमति ॥ ८८ (ख) ॥

sō'ī sukha lavalēsa jinha bāraka sapanēhum'lahē'u.

tē nahim ganahim khagēsa brahmasukhahi sajjana sumati. 88 (b).

Oh the King of Birds (khagēsa)! Any wise one who has been fortunate enough to ever taste or experience, even for once in his dream, that extreme mystical sense of bliss, felicity and beatitude that was experienced by Lord Shiva, by the citizens of Ayodhya as well as by me (i.e. by Kaagbhusund who is narrating this story) during that time—verily indeed and in all sooth, such a soul would never ever think of enjoying the bliss of Brahm-realisation for they regard it as inconsequential as compared to the bliss obtained by the experience of seeing Lord Ram playing as a child. [So, if they disregard Brahm-realisation, there is no question of them paying attention to other forms of joy, whether it is related to the temporal world or to the heavenly world.]¹ (Sortha no. 88-b)

[Note—¹The sight of Lord Ram fills every living being with a sense of extreme joy and happiness, and this is remarkably described in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 220 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it where the citizens of Janakpur are held in complete thrall as they rush out to watch Lord Ram and Laxman who had gone on a visit to the city.

Even King Janak, who was a highly self-realised soul renowned for his spiritual wisdom and enlightenment, was so enthralled by the sight of Lord Ram that he forgot who he was and exclaimed that the joy of Brahm-realisation is no match for the joy of seeing the Lord. Janak's exhilaration and sense of extreme blissfulness is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 215—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 216.]

चौ०. मैं पुनि अवध रहेउँ कछु काला । देखेउँ बालबिनोद रसाला ॥ १ ॥

राम प्रसाद भगति बर पायउँ । प्रभु पद बंदि निजाश्रम आयउँ ॥ २ ॥

caupā'ī.

mairṁ puni avadha rahē'um'kachu kālā. dēkhē'um'bālabinōda rasālā. 1.

rāma prasāda bhagati bara pāya'um'. prabhu pada bandi nijāśrama āya'um'. 2.

I stayed in Ayodhya for some more time¹, enjoying the enchanting sight of the many childish activities of Lord Ram. (1)

Finally, I was fortunate to be blessed by Lord Ram and was rewarded the boon of Bhakti (devotion) for him. Then I bowed my head most reverentially to the Lord and came back to my hermitage². (2)

[Note—¹How long did Kaagbhusund stay with the Lord in Ayodhya? He himself has answered it in Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 75, which says he abided there “for five years”.

²Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 13-14 that precede Doha no. 114.]

तब ते मोहि न ब्यापी माया । जब ते रघुनायक अपनाया ॥ ३ ॥
यह सब गुप्त चरित मैं गावा । हरि मायाँ जिमि मोहि नचावा ॥ ४ ॥

taba tē mōhi na byāpī māyā. jaba tē raghunāyaka apanāyā. 3.
yaha saba gupta carita maiṁ gāvā. hari māyām̐ jimi mōhi nacāvā. 4.

Since that time when Lord Ram accepted me and blessed me, Maya (delusions) has had no effect upon me; I am freed from all confusions and doubts for all times to come. (3)

I have narrated in detail this secret story of how Lord Hari’s Maya (his delusion creating powers) had kept me enthralled and made me dance to its tunes¹. (4)

[Note—¹What transpired between Kaagbhusund and Lord Ram was such a profound secret affair that no one present on the occasion could know anything about it. This is clearly mentioned while the saintly crow describes his experiences wherein he had seen the cosmic form of the Lord. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 79.]

निज अनुभव अब कहउँ खगेसा । बिनु हरि भजन न जाहिं कलेसा ॥ ५ ॥
राम कृपा बिनु सुनु खगराई । जानि न जाइ राम प्रभुताई ॥ ६ ॥

nija anubhava aba kaha'um̐ khagēsā. binu hari bhajana na jāhiṁ kalēsā. 5.
rāma kṛpā binu sunu khagarā'ī. jāni na jā'ī rāma prabhutā'ī. 6.

Oh King of Birds (khagēsā)! I will now tell you what I have deduced based on my personal experiences, what I have finally realised—and it is that none of the miseries, torments, griefs and pains associated with life can ever be eliminated or overcome without doing ‘Bhajan’ of Lord Hari (Sri Ram).

[To wit, without worshipping the Lord and adoring him, without having devotion for him and surrendering before him, without revering the Lord and paying one’s obeisance to him, it is futile to expect freedom from miseries, torments and troubles of life.]¹ (5)

Oh King of Birds (*khagarāṭī*)! And the second thing that I have realised is this: That without the grace of Lord Ram it is not possible to understand or fathom the immensity and profundity of Lord Ram's glories, majesty and greatness, about the Lord's divinity and holiness. (6)

[Note—¹In the verses that follow, Kaagbhusund has laid down some cardinal principles of life. They are worth noting by a sincere seeker as they would guide him along and show him the way in life.]

जानें बिनु न होइ परतीती । बिनु परतीति होइ नहिं प्रीती ॥ ७ ॥
प्रीति बिना नहिं भगति दिढ़ाई । जिमि खगपति जल कै चिकनाई ॥ ८ ॥

jānēm binu na hō'i paratīti. binu paratīti hō'i nahim prīti. 7.
prīti binā nahim bhagati dirhāī. jimi khagapati jala kai cikanāī. 8.

Without this knowledge and realisation, one would not have sufficient level of faith and conviction for the Lord (or it would be difficult to sustain them even if one manages to develop these virtues inside him for some time). And without having faith, it is difficult to have affection for the Lord. (7)

Without faith and affection, it is impossible to have steady Bhakti or devotion for the Lord. Oh King of Birds (*khagapati*)! It is like the case of lubricity caused by water for it is only a temporary thing, because as soon as the water dries up the lubricity too vanishes¹. (8)

[Note—¹To wit, if one does not know who Lord Ram really is, if he does not realise that he is the Supreme Being in a personified form, then he would be soon overcome by confusions and doubts as was the case with Garuda. As a result, he would not be able to develop deep faith for the Lord, and in the absence of this he would not be able to have firm devotion for the Lord either.]

सो०. बिनु गुर होइ कि ग्यान ग्यान कि होइ बिराग बिनु ।
गावहिं बेद पुरान सुख कि लहिअ हरि भगति बिनु ॥ ८९ (क) ॥
sōraṭhā.

binu gura hō'i ki gyāna gyāna ki hō'i birāga binu.
gāvahim bēda purāna sukha ki lahi'a hari bhagati binu. 89 (a).

Is it possible to have Gyan (true knowledge about spiritual subjects; true spiritual wisdom) without the help of a Guru (preceptor)¹?

Can anyone have Gyan without inculcating the virtue of Vairagya (renunciation, detachment and dispassion from irrelevant things or subjects that have no bearing to his objective).

Or, as the primary scriptures such as the Vedas and the Purans 'sing' or assert and declare in an unequivocal language, can anyone ever have true happiness and

bliss (in life) without having Bhakti (or devotion) for Lord Hari (the Lord God, i.e. Lord Ram in the present context)³? (Sortha no. 89-a)

[Note—¹A wise and learned preceptor would explain the intricacies pertaining to spiritual matters to a seeker in the same way a school teacher teaches a diligent student in his class. But what would a teacher or the preceptor do if the student or the seeker is not sincere to learn? And when he fails to attain the desired goal or knowledge, he goes out and blames his teacher or school or the preceptor for his own follies, his own failures and shortcomings.

²If a school student constantly getting distracted by myriad of things, he would not be able to concentrate on his studies, and this would naturally result in failure. Why should he then blame his school or teacher? Similarly, if one chooses to walk on the path leading to the Lord God, he must keep himself focussed by turning his mind away from all worldly attractions and temptations. Otherwise he would be worse off, being neither here nor there. Pretensions won't help as they would be like cheating one's own self.

³This statement highlights the main reward of having Bhakti—it is that the practitioner gets to have happiness and bliss in his life. After all, every endeavour a person makes has the objective of getting joy, happiness, comfort and peace, and if this is not achieved all efforts are wasted. Bhakti frees the creature from spiritual worries as now he is certain that the Lord God is over his head to take care of him, both in this life and in the life hereafter. Freedom from all sorts of worries in itself is a great bestower of joy, happiness, bliss and mental peace.]

कोउ बिश्राम कि पाव तात सहज संतोष बिनु।

चलै कि जल बिनु नाव कोटि जतन पचि पचि मरिअ ॥ ८९ (ख) ॥

kō'u biśrāma ki pāva tāta sahaja santōṣa binu.

calai ki jala binu nāva kōṭi jatana paci paci mari'a. 89 (b).

Dear (tāta), can anyone ever find rest, peace and tranquillity without having a natural sense of contentedness with whatever one has.

Can a boat float without water under it even if one dies making countless efforts to move it, and strains every nerve of his body till his last breath trying to row the boat?

[To wit, just as it is impossible to row the boat and make it move ahead if it is not floating on water, it is also impossible to find peace and tranquillity if one does not feel contented in one's heart and mind with whatever one has. This is because desires, wants, longings and yearnings have no end, and unless one is satisfied with himself and has renounced desires and longings, he will never be at rest for his entire life would be spent in fulfilling them. If he manages to fulfil one desire, other desires rear their heads one after another, and the vicious cycle continues unabated.] (Sortha no. 89-b)

चौ०. बिनु संतोष न काम नसाहीं । काम अछत सुख सपनेहुँ नाहीं ॥ १ ॥

राम भजन बिनु मिटहिं कि कामा । थल बिहीन तरु कबहुँ कि जामा ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

binu santōṣa na kāma nasāhīṁ. kāma achata sukha sapanēhum̐ nāhīṁ. 1.
rāma bhajana binu miṭahīṁ ki kāmā. thala bihīna taru kabahum̐ ki jāmā. 2.

Without having contentedness (known as “santōṣa”) one’s desires, wants and longings (known as “kāma”) never cease, and as long as they are present one can never find happiness and peace even in one’s dream¹. (1)

Can desires, wants and longings ever be eliminated without worshipping, adoring and having devotion for Lord Ram (compositely known as “bhajana”)²? Say, can a tree ever take root without soil (or earth)?

[To wit, just as it is not possible to expect a tree to grow without soil and earth to give its roots a solid foundation, it is also not possible to overcome Kaam without having contentedness on the one hand, and without worshipping and having devotion for Lord Ram on the other hand.] (2)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 16.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 79; (ii) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 90.]

बिनु बिग्यान कि समता आवइ । कोउ अवकास कि नभ बिनु पावइ ॥ ३ ॥

श्रद्धा बिना धर्म नहिं होई । बिनु महि गंध कि पावइ कोई ॥ ४ ॥

binu bigyāna ki samatā āva'i. kō'u avakāsa ki nabha binu pāva'i. 3.
śrad'dhā binā dharma nahīṁ hō'ī. binu mahi gandha ki pāva'i kō'ī. 4.

Can anyone have calmness and evenness of mind and steadfastness of thoughts without having spiritual wisdom and enlightenment¹?

Can anyone find space for movement without the presence of ether or the sky element²? (3)

It is not possible to practice the principles of Dharma (practicing a life of piety, probity and auspiciousness; a religious way of life marked by righteous conduct and thought) without having faith and firm belief in it³.

Say, can anyone smell something if there was no earth⁴? (4)

[Note—¹In the absence of wisdom and enlightenment, a creature would be fickle in mind and body. His thoughts would wander randomly like a free horse. With an unbridled mind there obviously cannot be any peace and rest for the creature. Without having spiritual wisdom and enlightenment it is not possible to see the world as being a manifestation of the same universal Atma or pure consciousness. Without this eclectic knowledge, one cannot view the world in a uniform way, and without this

uniformity one is bound to distinguish between different things and people in this world as one giving joy and the other giving sorrows. How can one find real and true peace with this attitude when one sees someone as his enemy and the other has his friend; or as one thing that gives comfort in a given situation and the same thing giving discomfort or pain in a different situation?

²If there is no sky element then the world would be a solid block of rock in which there would be no space even to breathe to survive.

³To wit, one has to have faith in the principles of Dharma in order to be able to follow them voluntarily, without prodding, and with full diligence and sincerity. Otherwise it would be a forced and boring affair that would not give the desired reward. And if one does not get the desired reward as expected by following Dharma, his faith in it would be further eroded. So the vicious cycle would destroy whatever little gain was made in the beginning. Hence, it is necessary to follow the laws and rules of Dharma in order to reap its full spiritual harvest.

⁴In outer space there is no odour of any kind. It is a characteristic feature of earth. The earth has its natural scent as is proved when one sprinkles water on dry soil: an earthy odour giving a sensation of dampness of soil is immediately felt. The same thing happens when the first rain falls on earth; the soil emanates a sweet earthy smell which spreads in the environment. So, just like it is not possible to have any kind of smell without earth, it is also not possible to diligently and voluntarily follow the principles of Dharma if one is not convinced of its value and usefulness.]

बिनु तप तेज कि कर बिस्तारा । जल बिनु रस कि होइ संसारा ॥ ५ ॥
सील कि मिल बिनु बुध सेवकाई । जिमि बिनु तेज न रूप गोसाँई ॥ ६ ॥

binu tapa tēja ki kara bistārā. jala binu rasa ki hō'i sansārā. 5.
sīla ki mila binu budha sēvakāī. jimi binu tēja na rūpa gōsāmī. 6.

Can anyone acquire the attributes of pristine glory, stupendous mystical powers and reach the pinnacle of spiritual potentials without attaining the powers and potentials that are inherent in Tapa (practicing austerities and doing penance)?

Can there be any taste without the presence of water (element) in this world¹?
(5)

[Kaagbhusund continues with his preaching to Garud who is listening attentively to the discourse—] Can anyone learn good manners and acquire excellent qualities without serving those who are wise and learned (i.e. without being in close contact with people who have excellent character and live an exemplary life so that one can learn from their example)?

Oh Lord (gōsāmī)! It is just not possible (to acquire goodness without serving and being in the company of those who are good themselves) like it being impractical to expect to have fire without its inherent colour². (6)

[Note—¹The tongue has taste buds which secrete enzymes that react with the chemicals present in the food eaten to give a sense of taste that is unique to that food.

But for this purpose the ‘water element’ is a necessity so that the chemical reactions can occur, that would in turn generate signals that are transported to the brain by the concerned nerves to activate that part of the brain which interpret the incoming stimulus and converts it into the sensation of taste.

²Fire has a radiant splendour and a fiery glow that is inherent to it and inseparable from it. There cannot be a fire without its natural glow and fiery colour.

Similarly, those who practice Tapa and lead a spiritual way of life, practicing all that involves the principles of Dharma (righteousness, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, nobility in thought and conduct), effuse a halo of holiness and divinity that comes from within them like a glow from a glow-worm. This halo arises from their enlightened inner-self because this glow is as an extension of the radiance of their Atma which is self-illuminated and splendidous like the brilliance of the fire element.

Further, anything that is near a raging fire too begins to glow; it would become red hot and glow. Similarly, when a person stays in the company of wise and learned men he would also be naturally influenced by them. Goodness and virtuousness would come to them naturally and automatically. They would begin to reflect the holiness and auspiciousness of the holy men they serve.

The example of the fire having a natural radiance and colour is cited here to stress that when all spiritual impurities are removed by one’s long association with saints and pious people then saintly characters would come naturally to him, and the fortunate person would begin to exhibit excellent virtues that would make him glorious and stand out as a beacon of hope for others in a dark world.]

निज सुख बिनु मन होइ कि थीरा । परस कि होइ बिहीन समीरा ॥ ७ ॥

कवनिउ सिद्धि कि बिनु बिस्वासा । बिनु हरि भजन न भव भय नासा ॥ ८ ॥

nija sukha binu mana hō'i ki thīrā. parasa ki hō'i bihīna samīrā. 7.

kavani'u sid'dhi ki binu bisvāsā. binu hari bhajana na bhava bhaya nāsā. 8.

Can one’s Mana (the combination of mind and heart) ever find stability and rest without experiencing the bliss of self-realisation (“nija sukha”)? [Or, can anyone finding stability of the Mana without finding something that would give a person true and real happiness and comfort in life.]¹?

Can there be the sensation or a feel of touch without the presence of the air (element)²? (7)

Can anyone attain success in any endeavour and reach one’s goals without having faith and belief³?

Indeed and in all sooth and without gainsay, the fears, the torments and the miseries associated with this mundane world consisting of the cycle of birth and death cannot be eliminated without worshipping and having reverence for Lord Hari (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the Parmatma)⁴. (8)

[Note—¹It is the natural desire of the creature’s Mana to seek peace, rest, happiness, joy, comfort and pleasure in life. But mistakenly it seeks them in the outside world and feels frustrated as what the world gives is only temporary and of very superficial nature as everything vanishes sooner or later like a cloud. To wit, the happiness and

joy that the world provides is not sustainable. The result is that the creature remains agitated and frustrated in its quest for peace and happiness.

But once a person becomes wisened and understands about where lies the true source of happiness and bliss by the virtue of the company of saints and self-realised souls that he keeps because he observes that they are in a perpetual state of bliss and blessedness, he too endeavours to practice to turn inwards and learn to enjoy the bliss that comes with self-realisation of the 'Atma', the pure Consciousness that is the source of eternal bliss and happiness.

Once this eternal source of bliss and happiness is accessed, the seeker's Mana becomes restful and calm and steady. It stops its restless wonderings and of being in a state of constant flux.

In this context refer to Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 45 where the emotional condition of king Dasrath is being described. It is said here that his emotional and mental condition was as shaky and uncertain like the leaf of the banyan tree that sways and shakes wildly in the wind.

²Air is not visible, but still when a soft breeze blows we can feel it touching our faces or caressing the skin of the body in general. The air element keeps the body alive, and therefore it is called 'vital wind or vital air element' in metaphysics. Can a dead body feel or touch anything? Therefore, the 'air or the wind element' is necessary for the sensation of touch to exist; it helps the creature to feel the presence of life within his own body as well as in the external world.

³No one can ever attain success in anything if he is not sure of what he is doing, if he does not have faith in his own abilities, if he has no confidence in himself, if he does not believe that he would surely attain success, if he has no faith in the worth of the goal or the objective he is pursuing and feels that he is merely wasting his time and energy in its pursuit. First and foremost requirement to attain success in any endeavour therefore is to have firm faith in one's own self, to have a firm belief that he would indeed succeed, and a faith and belief that the goal or objective when attained would serve him for his own good. Otherwise, it would be a half-hearted and disinterested effort which is sure to fail.

⁴To wit, one cannot attain fearlessness from the torments of the world without having faith in Lord Hari or Lord Ram. One must have a firm belief in the Lord to find peace and stability of mind and heart.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 79; (ii) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 80; and (iii) Doha no. 122-a.]

दो०. बिनु बिस्वास भगति नहिं तेहि बिनु द्रवहिं न रामु।
राम कृपा बिनु सपनेहुं जीव न लह बिश्रामु॥ ९० (क)॥
dōhā.

binu bisvāsa bhagati nahim tēhi binu dravahim na rāmu.
rāma kṛpā binu sapanēhum̐ jīva na laha biśrāmu. 90 (a).

It is not possible to have Bhakti (devotion) for Lord Ram without having a faith and belief in him¹. And without Bhakti, Lord Ram cannot be pleased; his heart would not melt and become mellowed for a Jiva (living being) without the latter having Bhakti for him².

And without Lord Ram's grace, blessings and benevolence, a Jiva can never find rest and peace even in a dream. (Doha no. 90-a)

[Note—¹In this context, refer to Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 80; (b) Aranya Kand, (i) Chanda line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 36; (ii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 42; (c) Uttar Kand, (i) Chanda line nos. 11-12 that precede Doha no. 13; (ii) Doha no. 90; (iii) Doha no. 103-a; (iv) Doha no. 126.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 35—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 36 where Lord Ram has stressed the importance of Bhakti and outlined the different types of Bhaktis there are. He also reiterates that without Bhakti it is not possible to please him.

There are countless verses in Ram Charit Manas where the importance and significance of Bhakti have been highlighted. Some of them in the present Canto called Uttar Kand are the following: (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 35; (ii) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 45; (iii) Doha no. 78; (iv) Doha no. 85-b; (v) Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precede Doha no. 119; (vi) Chaupai line nos. 7-19 that precede Doha no. 12.]

सो०. अस बिचारि मतिधीर तजि कुतर्क संसय सकल ।

भजहु राम रघुबीर करुनाकर सुंदर सुखद ॥ ९० (ख) ॥

sōraṭhā.

asa bicāri matidhīra taji kutarka sansaya sakala.

bhajahu rāma raghubīra karunākara sundara sukhada. 90 (b).

[Sage Kaagbhusund advises Garud thus—] Keeping the aforesaid principle in view, be wise and have a stable mind by discarding all sorts of scepticism, confusions and doubts. With this erudition and wisdom, you should worship, revere and adore Lord Ram, the brave Lord of king Raghu's race (of Ayodhya—"rāma raghubīra"), the Lord who is most merciful and compassionate, who is beautiful (because of his excellent virtues and characters), and who is a bestower of (spiritual and temporal) happiness and comfort¹. (Sortha no. 90-b)

[Note—¹A similar idea is expressed elsewhere also in Ram Charit Manas. For instance, refer to: (a) Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 200; (b) Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 66; (ii) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 85.]

चौ०. निज मति सरिस नाथ मैं गाई । प्रभु प्रताप महिमा खगराई ॥ १ ॥

कहेउँ न कछु करि जुगुति बिसेषी । यह सब मैं निज नयनन्हि देखी ॥ २ ॥

caupāṭi.

nija mati sarisa nātha mair̥m gāṭi. prabhu pratāpa mahimā khagarāṭi. 1.
kahē'um̃ na kachu kari juguti bisēṣi. yaha saba mair̥m nija nayanānhi dēkhī. 2.

[The crow-saint Kaagbhusund said to Garud—] Oh Lord and the King of Birds (nātha; khagarāṭi)! I have recited (narrated) the story describing the majestic glories and the greatness of my Lord (Sri Ram) in accordance with my intellect and wisdom¹.
(1)

I have not invented anything to spice up the narration and add colour or flavour to it because I have seen all this with my own eyes; I am a witness to what I have told you².

[To wit, the divine, holy and glorious story of my Lord Ram that I, Kaagbhusund, have narrated to you, Garud, is a truthful and honest account of the events as I had seen them myself, and I bear witness to it. It's not something imaginary or cooked-up.] (2).

[Note—¹Lord Ram's story is so vast and of a myriad variety that it would be wrong to claim that a particular version is the only and the most perfect narration of the events, with nothing missing from it. Each narrator is honest in rendering this holy story of the Ramayan, though one narrator's version may differ from another's. This fact is reiterated in verse nos. 3-6 that follow herein below. Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 33.

Even Lord Shiva asserted that there are many versions of the story of Lord Ram's time, life and deeds on earth as the Lord had manifested himself on countless occasions, and therefore a particular story narrating one of such manifestations would surely differ from the other in its finer details, though the overall structure remains the same as the Lord himself is the same. So, when Shiva began his narration of the story for the benefit of his consort Uma, he selected one such version that came to his mind. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 3-5 that precede Doha no. 114; (ii) Sortha no. 120-d; and (iii) Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precede Doha no. 122.

²This statement of Kaagbhusund 'that he is not exaggerating anything as he had personally seen or witnessed all the events that he has narrated while telling the story of the Ramayan to Garud' has a profound metaphysical and spiritual import. On the face it looks that he had been with Lord Ram throughout his life, even accompanying him to the forest and witnessing all the events occurring there, watched the war of Lanka from somewhere, and finally witnessed the Lord's coronation on the throne of Ayodhya upon his return from the forest after fourteen years of absence.

But the fact is that he went to Ayodhya and stayed there for only five years when Lord Ram was a child. This is clearly mentioned in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 75 ("I stayed for five years at Ayodhya"); and Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 89 ("I stayed for some time at Ayodhya").

So what does this imply? Kaagbhusund was not an ordinary bird known as crow as we understand the word 'crow' to mean. He was a self-realised soul who could identify himself with his Atma which is pure consciousness that lived inside his physical gross body of a crow. So when he deeply meditated, he transported himself from the physical world to the transcendental world of pure consciousness, and in this

state Kaagbhusund was not the physical crow as the world knew him, but was the Atma which the world could not see.

Now, this entity known as the Atma is universal and all-knowing. Whatever the Atma wants to know becomes known to it. The reason is that the individual's Atma is a small fraction of the cosmic Atma known as the Parmatma. Lord Ram is the Parmatma, and therefore the Atma of Kaagbhusund was a 'kin' of this cosmic Atma. When a kin wants access to someone, it is very easy for him to do so. Hence, when Kaagbhusund wished to know what his senior kin, in this case the Parmatma known as Lord Ram, did during a particular period, he could easily know about it.

In a way, therefore, what he means by saying that 'he saw the events with his eyes' is that he could see them with 'his inner-eyes of awareness that his Atma inherently possessed; the knowledge that his pure consciousness gained by the mere wish of it', and not by the physical eyes of his body!]

महिमा नाम रूप गुण गाथा । सकल अमित अनंत रघुनाथा ॥ ३ ॥

निज निज मति मुनि हरि गुण गावहिं । निगम सेष सिव पार न पावहिं ॥ ४ ॥

mahimā nāma rūpa guna gāthā. sakala amita ananta raghunāthā. 3.

nija nija mati muni hari guna gāvahiṁ. nigama sēṣa siva pāra na pāvahiṁ. 4.

The majesty and the greatness, the stupendity of the glory, the divinity and the holiness of Lord Ram's name, his visible form, his excellent qualities as well as the variety of his mystical stories—all of them are endless and boundless just like the Lord himself¹. (3)

The great sages, saints, seers, hermits, mystics and enlightened ones—all have sung or recited the Lord's divine story in accordance with their intellectual abilities and understanding. Even Vedas (the primary scriptures), Lord Shiva (the Great God who is deemed to be the wisest and the most enlightened in the pantheon of Gods), and Lord Sheshnath (the cosmic serpent said to hold this world aloft its hood) can't reach the end of it². (4)

[Note—¹To wit, the Lord in his cosmic form is the Supreme Atma known as the 'Parmatma'. He is also known as 'Brahm', the Supreme Being representing pure cosmic Consciousness that has eclectic qualities of being eternal, infinite and universal. This cosmic entity is beyond comprehension. Therefore, all the attempts made to describe such an esoteric entity are limited in their reach and scope as the Lord can't be known, described, measured and weighed in entirety by any means whatsoever, making all narrations or renderings of his story have a limited extent.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 33; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 3-5 that precede Doha no. 114; (iii) Sortha no. 120-d; and (iv) Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precede Doha no. 122.]

तुम्हहि आदि खग मसक प्रजंता । नभ उड़ाहिं नहिं पावहिं अंता ॥ ५ ॥

तिमि रघुपति महिमा अवगाहा । तात कबहुँ कोउ पाव कि थाहा ॥ ६ ॥

tumhahi ādi khaga masaka prajantā. nabha urāhiṃ nahim pāvahiṃ antā. 5.
timi raghupati mahimā avagāhā. tāta kabahum̐ kō'u pāva ki thāhā. 6.

[Kaagbhusund gives an analogy to explain what he means.] All winged creatures (i.e. the birds) like you fly high in the sky according to their capacity, but none can find the depth or an end of it (the sky). (5)

Oh dear Garud (tāta), in the same fashion who can fathom the fathomless depth of Lord Ram's glories, majesty and greatness.

[To wit, just as no one can measure the sky and claim to have reached its end, no one can also claim that he knows the full story of Lord Ram's life, time and deeds. What he knows and narrates is a part or version of it, and each such version is correct in itself.] (6)

रामु काम सत कोटि सुभग तन । दुर्गा कोटि अमित अरि मर्दन ॥ ७ ॥
सक्र कोटि सत सरिस बिलासा । नभ सत कोटि अमित अवकासा ॥ ८ ॥

rāmu kāma sata kōṭi subhaga tana. durgā kōṭi amita ari mardana. 7.
sakra kōṭi sata sarisa bilāsā. nabha sata kōṭi amita avakāsā. 8.

[Now, the greatness, the majesty and the excellent qualities of Lord Ram are being outlined by citing analogies and metaphors to help in comparison and understanding the immensity of each virtue of the Lord.]

Lord Ram's physical form is equivalent to millions (i.e. countless) Kaams (cupids; the patron god of beauty and charm) in its attractiveness, charm and beauty.

He is an eliminator of enemies like millions of goddess Durgas¹ rolled into one. [To wit, Lord Ram can defeat, vanquish, destroy and crush even the most formidable and invincible of enemies of a devotee.] (7)

Lord Ram's majesty, powers and authority is equivalent to what millions of Indras, the King of Gods, possess.

His abode and extension is equivalent to millions of skies taken together. [To wit, the Lord is as infinite, immeasurable and fathomless as the vast and endless sky.] (8)

[Note—¹Goddess Durga is the form of the cosmic Shakti, the dynamic powers of the Supreme Being that can defeat and eliminate all evil forces in creation that cause sufferings to its inhabitants. She is usually worshipped by the warrior class to invoke her blessings to overcome one's enemies.]

दो०. मरुत कोटि सत बिपुल बल रबि सत कोटि प्रकास ।
ससि सत कोटि सुसीतल समन सकल भव त्रास ॥ ९१ (क) ॥
dōhā.

maruta kōṭi sata bipula bala rabi sata kōṭi prakāsa.
sasi sata kōṭi susītala samana sakala bhava trāsa. 91 (a).

He has the immensity of strength, might and force that is equivalent to what millions and trillions of (i.e. countless)¹ Wind Gods possess.

Similarly, his brilliance, radiance and glory are equivalent to millions of (countless) suns.

He is calm, soothing and comforting like millions of full moons.

And he is the one who can eliminate or destroy or dispel all the fears and torments caused by mundane existence in a world consisting of the cycle of birth and death with its accompanying miseries, grief and pain. (Doha no. 91-a)

[Note—¹The phrase used in the text is “kōṭi sata”. ‘Koti’ means ten millions, and ‘Sata’ means seven. It is a figure of speech to mean a very large quantity or number of something. So here it means Lord Ram possesses strength and might that are absolutely stupendous and immeasurable. The ‘wind force’ is cited here because no one can actually see the wind in physical terms to judge how strong and powerful it can be, but a fierce storm can have immense punch and force enough to uproot huge trees and raise the ocean to form giant waves of destructive proportions; it can overturn ships that used sails and relied on wind to drive them; it can made such ships go off course and collide with rocks; and it can even down modern airplanes.

Similarly, Lord Ram’s astounding strength and powers are subtle and invisible from the outside. On the surface he appears to be like an ordinary human being, but his inner strength is immeasurable, and it is infinite and intense in its force and punch.]

काल कोटि सत सरिस अति दुस्तर दुर्ग दुरंत ।
धूमकेतु सत कोटि सम दुराधरष भगवंत ॥ ९१ (ख) ॥

kāla kōṭi sata sarisa ati dustara durga duranta.
dhūmakētu sata kōṭi sama durādharāṣa bhagavanta. 91 (b).

Like numerous Gods of death, he is irresistible, formidable and invincible.

And the Lord (bhagavanta) is irrepressible and unstoppable like countless comets (balls of fire)¹. (Doha no. 91-b)

[Note—¹The word used in the text is “dhūmakētu”. It literally means a comet. But this is a metaphoric way of taking the example of a cannon ball which is a ‘ball of fire’ when shot from the barrel of the cannon; it just cannot be stopped in its flight towards its target, and anything it touches is reduced to ash due to its searing heat. It appears to resemble a comet streaking through the night sky, a ball of fire flying from one end of the horizon to the other unobstructed and unopposed.

Lord Ram is similarly empowered. No one can stop him if he decided to do something. His potentials and dynamism are like a ball of fire. His glories, virtues, character, authority and strength are so remarkable that they stand out and can be easily noticed like a comet streaking across the sky.

Lord Ram does not exhibit his majestic powers too often, but when he does it is outstanding. It is like the case of a comet that does not make its appearance in a

routine manner like the moon, the stars and the sun, but when it does it is immediately noticed and becomes instantly recognisable.]

चौ०. प्रभु अगाध सत कोटि पताला । समन कोटि सत सरिस कराला ॥ १ ॥

तीरथ अमित कोटि सम पावन । नाम अखिल अघ पूग नसावन ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

prabhu agādha sata kōṭi patālā. samana kōṭi sata sarisa karālā. 1.
tīratha amita kōṭi sama pāvana. nāma akhila agha pūga nasāvana. 2.

The Lord (“prabhu”—i.e. Sri Ram) is fathomless and endless like millions of (i.e. countless) subterranean worlds or the nether worlds (patālā).

He is dreadful and fear-inspiring like millions (countless) Yamas¹ (God of Death). (1)

He is as holy, pure and sanctified as millions (countless) pilgrim places taken together. [Or, he is as purifying and a provider of salvation as countless pilgrim places combined.]

His holy name is powerful enough to destroy or neutralise the combined effects of all the sins (akhila agha). (2)

[Note—¹Lord Ram appears to be fearful to those who are sinners, who are wicked, and who are evil in their hearts. A person who has led a good and meritorious life has no fear of the God of death or Yama because he is certain that Yama just can't send him to hell to suffer. Only those who are sinful fear Yama. Similarly, only those who are sinful, pervert and corrupt need to fear Lord Ram. For those who are good and righteous, Lord Ram is like a dear friend.]

हिमगिरि कोटि अचल रघुबीरा । सिंधु कोटि सत सम गंभीरा ॥ ३ ॥

कामधेनु सत कोटि समाना । सकल काम दायक भगवाना ॥ ४ ॥

himagiri kōṭi acala raghubīrā. sindhu kōṭi sata sama gambhīrā. 3.
kāmadhēnu sata kōṭi samānā. sakala kāma dāyaka bhagavānā. 4.

Lord Ram, the brave warrior of the king Raghu's race (raghubīrā), is steadfast, stable, unwavering, unchanging and serious as numerous snow-covered mountains (known as the Himalayas) taken together¹.

He is deep, grave, serious and emotionless as millions of (i.e. numerous) oceans². (3)

Like countless Kamdhenu cows, he can grant (fulfil) all the wishes and desires of his devotees³. (4)

[Note—¹Just as the mighty Himalayas that are not affected by any change in the world, Lord Ram too remains calm and peaceful in a world mired by turmoil and subject to constant changes.

²The Ocean is very deep, dense and grave. Though on the surface it may roar and seem to be choppy with huge tumultuous waves, but deep inside it is calm and dense. Similarly, Lord Ram may appear on the surface to exhibit so much variance in character, emotions and qualities, and he may do so many different deeds and behave differently under different situations, but internally he is as quiet, dense, grave and serious as the depths of the mighty ocean. Not even the earthquake affects the deep recesses of the ocean.

³The ‘Kamdhenu cow’ is the cow of gods. It has the mystical ability to give whatever is asked from it. Similarly, Lord Ram fulfils all the desires and needs of his devotees.]

सारद कोटि अमित चतुराई । बिधि सत कोटि सृष्टि निपुनाई ॥ ५ ॥
बिष्णु कोटि सम पालन कर्ता । रुद्र कोटि सत सम संहर्ता ॥ ६ ॥

sārada kōṭi amita caturā'ī. bidhi sata kōṭi sṛṣṭi nipunā'ī. 5.
biṣṇu kōṭi sama pālana kartā. rudra kōṭi sata sama saṁhartā. 6.

The Lord (Sri Ram) is wise and clever like millions of Goddess Saraswatis (the patron goddess of wisdom, knowledge and learning).

He is an expert in all the fields of knowledge and has creative expertise required to create millions of creations at once just like the expertise of millions of (i.e. innumerable) Vidhis (the creator known as Brahma) taken together. (6)

He is a sustainer and protector of this creation like millions of (i.e. countless) Vishnus combined.

And likewise, he (Lord Ram) has the ability to terminate this creation as possessed by millions of Shivas (who is the Lord responsible to bring an end to a particular phase of creation) working together. (6)

धनद कोटि सत सम धनवाना । माया कोटि प्रपंच निधाना ॥ ७ ॥
भार धरन सत कोटि अहीसा । निरवधि निरुपम प्रभु जगदीसा ॥ ८ ॥

dhanada kōṭi sata sama dhanavānā. māyā kōṭi prapañca nidhānā. 7.
bhāra dharana sata kōṭi ahīsā. niravadhi nirupama prabhu jagadīsā. 8.

He is rich and prosperous like millions of (i.e. numerous) Kubers (the God of wealth who is responsible for the treasury of the Gods)¹.

The Lord has stupendous abilities to create countless delusions (māyā) on the one hand, and to control such delusions on the other hand. [It is because he is the Lord of Maya.] (7)

He has the ability to bear the burden of the world, no matter how heavy and massive it is, like millions of celestial serpents known as Seshnath would do simultaneously².

Forsooth, Lord Ram is indeed the sovereign Lord of the entire creation, one who has infinite glories, powers, abilities, authority and strength that have no comparison anywhere. (8)

[Note—¹It simply means that Lord Ram has no dearth of anything or any material in this world. Therefore it follows that he can liberally give anything which his devotees seek from him. Only someone who has abundance of anything can cheerfully share or give it to others. A pauper can't do so even if he wants to.

²To wit, Lord Ram can very easily take care of this creation with all its inconsistencies and problems. According to mythology, the world is held aloft on the hood of a serpent known as Seshnath which prevents it from sinking into the void of the cosmic ocean. The comparison with millions of such Seshnaths means that even if the world becomes so full of sins and evil properties that it turns thousands of times denser or grosser than what it is at present, still Lord Ram can sustain it and take care of its welfare.]

छं०. निरुपम न उपमा आन राम समान रामु निगम कहै । १ ।
जिमि कोटि सत खद्योत सम रबि कहत अति लघुता लहै ॥ २ ॥
एहि भाँति निज निज मति बिलास मुनीस हरिहि बखानहीं । ४ ।
प्रभु भाव गाहक अति कृपाल सप्रेम सुनि सुख मानहीं ॥ ३ ॥

chanda.

nirupama na upamā āna rāma samāna rāmu nigama kahai. 1.
jimi kōṭi sata khadyōta sama rabi kahata ati laghutā lahai. 2.
ēhi bhāmṭi nija nija mati bilāsa munīsa harihi bakhānahīm. 3.
prabhu bhāva gāhaka ati krpāla saprēma suni sukha mānahīm. 4.

The Vedas (primary scriptures) declare unanimously that Lord Ram is incomparable; he has no peer. Indeed and without gainsay, Lord Ram is comparable to only himself and no one else¹. (Chanda line no. 1)

It would be demeaning for the glory of the sun and causing diminution to its cosmic splendour and high stature by trying to compare its brilliance with the combined light emanating from millions of glow-worms. [To wit, it is really insulting and humiliating for the sun to be compared to the humble and inconsequential glow-worm out of the myriad sources of bright light in this universe in order to gauge how brilliant the sun is. Likewise it is highly incongruous, ridiculous and absurd to compare Lord Ram with any other god or living being for none can compare with the Lord's glory even fractionally.] (Chanda line no. 2)

So, the great and seers expound about the glories, the majesty, the holiness, the divinity, the powers, the authority and the mysteries of the Lord according to their intellectual abilities and understanding of their mind. [Just like the case of different people using different examples and comparisons in order to explain how brilliant the sun is, learned sages and seers preach about the Lord in accordance with their own

understanding and grasp of the Lord's magnificence and majesty. All of them are true, but at the same time none of them are complete.] (Chanda line no. 3)

The Lord is exceedingly graceful and compassionate; he respects and values the affection and emotions of all his devotees². Thus he cheerfully accepts and appreciates in whichever way and to whatever extent they honour the Lord in their own way, using any types of words and intellectual means that they possess. [The Lord does not make a fuss about the way a devotee praises him, honours and worships him. Every single gesture of the devotee aimed at showing his respect for the Lord is accepted by him with due thanks.] (Chanda line no. 4)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 150.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 5-11 that precede Doha no. 28; (ii) Chanda line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 326; (iii) Doha no. 336; and (iv) Aranya Kand, Doha no. 136.]

दो०. रामु अमित गुन सागर थाह कि पावड़ कोड़ ।
संतन्ह सन जस किछु सुनेउँ तुम्हहि सुनायउँ सोइ ॥ ९२ (क) ॥
dōhā.

rāmu amita guna sāgara thāha ki pāva'i kō'i.
santanha sana jasa kichu sunē'um̐ tumhahi sunāya'um̐ sō'i. 92 (a).

Lord Ram is an ocean of countless virtues, how can anyone find his depth (or, how can anyone measure the Lord's astounding virtues and stupendous glories)?

I (Kaagbhusund) have told you (Garud) what little I know by way of hearing from other saints. (Doha no. 92-a)

सो०. भाव बस्य भगवान सुख निधान करुना भवन ।
तजि ममता मद मान भजिअ सदा सीता रवन ॥ ९२ (ख) ॥
sōraṭhā.

bhāva basya bhagavāna sukha nidhāna karunā bhavana.
taji mamatā mada māna bhaji'a sadā sītā ravana. 92 (b).

The Lord (Sri Ram), who is an abode of joy, bliss and happiness as well as a fountain of mercy and compassion, can be won-over by having the virtues of sincere devotion, love and faith.

Therefore, one should abandon all sorts of worldly attachments, ego and pride, and instead, worship and adore Lord Ram, the dear husband of Sita (sītā ravana)¹. (Sortha no. 92-b)

[Note—¹Kaagbhusund advises that one should 'worship the dear husband of Sita'. Obviously he means Lord Ram. But the "Ram" he means to be adored and

worshipped is the personified form of the Supreme Being, and one should look at Lord Ram with this understanding. Surely and certainly, nothing would be gained spiritually by merely ritualistically worshipping a King of a certain kingdom whose name happened to be 'Ram'. It would be a futile exercise. The real and actual gain would come only when one reveres Lord Ram with a clear understanding that he is the Supreme Being in that form.]

चौ०. सुनि भुसुंङि के बचन सुहाए । हरषित खगपति पंख फुलाए ॥ १ ॥
नयन नीर मन अति हरषाना । श्रीरघुपति प्रताप उर आना ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

suni bhusuṇḍi kē bacana suhā'ē. haraṣita khagapati paṅkha phulā'ē. 1.
nayana nīra mana ati haraṣānā. śrīraghupati pratāpa ura ānā. 2.

Hearing the pleasant and sweet words of Kaagbhusund, the king of the birds (Garud) rejoiced and he was so much euphoric and thrilled that his feathers spread out and became puffed-up. (1)

Tears of joy welled-up in his eyes, and his Mana (mind and heart both) was exceedingly exuberant. He (Garud) meditated upon the glories and the divinity of Lord Ram, and enshrined them in his heart. (2)

पाछिल मोह समुझि पछिताना । ब्रह्म अनादि मनुज करि माना ॥ ३ ॥
पुनि पुनि काग चरन सिरु नावा । जानि राम सम प्रेम बढावा ॥ ४ ॥

pāchila mōha samujhi pachitānā. brahma anādi manuja kari mānā. 3.
puni puni kāga carana siru nāvā. jāni rāma sama prēma baḥhāvā. 4.

When he (Garud) recalled his earlier delusions and doubts about the Lord, he regretted very much that he had gravely erred to think that Brahm, the eternal, infinite and cosmic form of the Supreme Being, is a human being¹. (3)

In order to express his gratitude and reverence, he (Garud) repeatedly bowed his head at the feet of the Crow (Kaagbhusund) for whom he had developed immense respect and affection as he treated him to be equivalent to Lord Ram himself². (4)

[Note—¹Garud was utterly confounded when he saw Lord Ram fighting the war of Lanka like an ordinary human prince. For sometime he forgot that Lord Ram was actually Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being, who was merely playing the role of a human prince as required by some peculiar circumstances. It was a mirage that created a lot of delusion for Garud. Now that delusion was removed, and he became wisened about the truth and reality of the Lord.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 68—to Doha no. 69. Here we have read how Kaagbhusund too had puffed-up feathers and tears of joy in his eyes as he became exhilarated when he realised how

the narration of the divine story of Lord Ram had provided immense joy, happiness and contentedness to his listener, Garud.

²The idea here is that a true devotee of the Lord becomes one like the Lord; he is an image of the Lord. From metaphysical perspective too this is true because the living being's true identity, his true 'self', is the Atma and not his physical body, and this Atma of the individual is the same pure Consciousness that exists at the cosmic level and is known as Brahm, which in turn is represented by Lord Ram. Lord Ram therefore is the cosmic Atma known as the Parmatma, the Supreme Being.

Thus, a wise, enlightened and truly self-realised devotee of Lord Ram is indeed equivalent to the Lord himself; he is an image of Lord Ram because his Atma and the cosmic Atma known as the Parmatma are the same.

Hence, when spiritual wisdom dawned upon Garud, he began to treat Kaagbhusund, a devotee par-excellence of Lord Ram, reverentially, as being equally respectable and honourable as Lord Ram himself.

Garud's respect and affection for the Crow grew manifold after learning that he has had the rare honour and privilege of staying with Lord Ram for five years and playing with him like a dear friend during the Lord's childhood days, and of being personally blessed by the Lord who had even showed him his cosmic form. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 75—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 89.]

गुर बिनु भव निधि तरङ्ग न कोई । जौं बिरंचि संकर सम होई ॥ ५ ॥
संसय सर्प ग्रसेउ मोहि ताता । दुखद लहरि कुतर्क बहु ब्राता ॥ ६ ॥

gura binu bhava nidhi tara'i na kōī. jaum birañci saṅkara sama hōī. 5.
sansaya sarpa grasē'u mōhi tātā. dukhada lahari kutarka bahu brātā. 6.

One cannot cross the formidable ocean symbolised by this gross world consisting of the cycle of birth and death, the world and life of mundane existence, without the help of a Guru (teacher, preceptor and spiritual guide) even if one is as high and mighty and resourceful as Viranchi (the creator Brahma) and Lord Shiva. (5)

[Garud told Kaagbhusund—] My Dear (tātā)! I was bitten by the snake symbolising doubts and delusions. Even as a person bitten by a snake becomes delirious and begins to suffer from waves of fits, overwhelming pain and insurmountable misery, I too was overcome with waves of delusions, doubts and confusions that drowned me in immense grief and sorrows. [I became agitated and emotionally upset. I lost the composure of my mind and the peace of my heart.] (6)

तव सरूप गारुड़ि रघुनायक । मोहि जिआयउ जन सुखदायक ॥ ७ ॥
तव प्रसाद मम मोह नसाना । राम रहस्य अनूपम जाना ॥ ८ ॥

tava sarūpa gāruḍi raghunāyaka. mōhi ji'āya'u jana sukhadāyaka. 7.
tava prasāda mama mōha nasānā. rāma rahasya anūpama jānā. 8.

The Lord of the Raghus (“raghunāyaka”—i.e. Lord Sri Ram) who bestows joy, happiness and delight upon his devotees, followers and dependants (jana sukhadāyaka)¹, has relieved me from my torments and agonies by motivating me to come to a snake charmer in your form (tava sarūpa gāruḍi)². (7)

It is indeed due to your grace and blessings that all my delusions, misconceptions and misgivings have vanished. I have been privileged enough to learn about the profound mystery and gain some insight about the truth and reality of Lord Ram that are exceptional and most esoteric. (8)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chanda line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 186 where the Gods, including the creator Brahma, have praised Lord Vishnu similarly.

²Here, the delusions and doubts that had made Garud agitated are the symbolic fits of severe pain and delirium from which a person suffers when he is bitten by a snake. A wise person then advises him to immediately go to a snake charmer who knows the trick by which the horrifying effects of snake bite can be neutralised. Kaagbhusund is that symbolic snake charmer. The antidote that he administered to Garud was the narration of the story of Lord Ram that has the potential to overcome the greatest of spiritual delusions. Once cured of the side effects of snake bite, the patient feels relieved and cheerful; he is highly grateful to his benefactor, the snake charmer. Likewise, here Garud is very obliged and thankful to Kaagbhusund for enlightening him about Lord Ram, and helping him to overcome his doubts and confusions as clearly stated in verse no. 8.]

दो०. ताहि प्रसंसि बिबिधि बिधि सीस नाइ कर जोरि ।
बचन बिनीत सप्रेम मृदु बोलेउ गरुड़ बहोरि ॥ ९३ (क) ॥
dōhā.

tāhi prasansi bibidhi bidhi sīsa nā'i kara jōri.
bacana binīta saprēma mṛdu bōlē'u garuṛa bahōri. 93 (a).

Having lavishly praised Kaagbhusund in various ways, bowing his head reverentially before him, and joining his palms as a gesture of supplication and respect to him, Garud said once again, using most polite and affectionate words --- (Doha no. 93-a)

प्रभु अपने अबिबेक ते बूझउँ स्वामी तोहि ।
कृपासिंधु सादर कहहु जानि दास निज मोहि ॥ ९३ (ख) ॥

prabhu apanē abibēka tē būjha'um' svāmī tōhi.
krpāsindhu sādara kahahu jāni dāsa nija mōhi. 93 (b).

‘Oh Lord (“prabhu”—i.e. Kaagbhusund)! It is out of my own lack of knowledge and wisdom that I dare to ask you something.

You are an ocean of mercy and kindness (and I am therefore sure that you will not feel offended at my impertinence). Regard me as your follower and devotee, and be gracious enough to answer my queries (so that all my doubts that still linger in my mind are put to rest). (Doha no. 93-b)

चौ०. तुम्ह सबग्य तग्य तम पारा । सुमति सुसील सरल आचारा ॥ १ ॥
ग्यान बिरति बिग्यान निवासा । रघुनायक के तुम्ह प्रिय दासा ॥ २ ॥
caupāī.

tumha sarbagya tagya tama pārā. sumati susīla sarala ācārā. 1.
gyāna birati bigyāna nivāsā. raghunāyaka kē tumha priya dāsā. 2.

You are all-knowing; nothing is secret or hidden from you (sarbagya). You have a transcendental level of wisdom and knowledge (tagya), and your mind and intellect are free from the dark taint of delusions and worldly confusions (tama pārā).

You are wise and enlightened (sumati); you are courteous and virtuous (susīla); you are simple, humble and unpretentious (sarala); and you have all the goodness of character and righteousness in behaviour (ācārā)—that one expects from a great saint, a great sage, and a self-realised soul. (1)

You have Gyan (“gyāna”—true spiritual knowledge); you have the virtues of renunciation, detachment and dispassion (birati); and you are an embodiment of the eclectic spiritual virtues of self-realisation and enlightenment (bigyāna nivāsā).

And above all (and the crowning glory of all your wonderful virtues is that—) you are a devotee and a follower who is very dear (priya dāsā) to Lord Ram (who is also known as “raghunāyaka”—the Lord of the line of Kings descending from king Raghu of Ayodhya)¹. (2)

[Note—¹The point to note in this observation is that the other qualities are possessed by many acclaimed sages, seers and saints, but it is rare that someone would become dear to Lord Ram. It is one thing to love Lord Ram, and another thing when the person is loved by the Lord himself. Obviously, the latter type of person who is loved by the Supreme Being himself is definitely and surely the most privileged, and extremely fortunate and blessed.

To understand why and how a devotee who is loved by Lord Ram is more fortunate than others, let us take a simple example from the ordinary world. If a king of a place favours one of his numerous subjects and treats him with special attention as compared to others, inspite of the fact that this favoured person is most ordinary and may even be low down in the rung of social hierarchy, is this person not extraordinarily lucky? Of course, if the king is a nice ruler, considerate, merciful, kind and gracious, all his subjects will adore him and love him. The king in turn would also love all his subjects equally, but if he shows special affection for a certain person in the kingdom though that person is most humble, is he not very fortunate to have a special place in the heart of the realm’s sovereign? Surely there must be something unique in this person which has endeared him to the king, though that unique and special quality may be so subtle that it is not usually possible for others to realise what it is and its value for the king.

The same thing applies to Kaagbhusund here. Surely he had some extraordinary virtues in him, or an ordinary-looking virtue on the face but which he had refined to its highest purity that was so remarkable that Lord Ram loved him more specially.]

कारन कवन देह यह पाई । तात सकल मोहि कहहु बुझाई ॥ ३ ॥
राम चरित सर सुंदर स्वामी । पायहु कहाँ कहहु नभगामी ॥ ४ ॥

kārana kavana dēha yaha pā'ī. tāta sakala mōhi kahahu bujhā'ī. 3.
rāma carita sara sundara svāmī. pāyahu kahām' kahahu nabhagāmī. 4.

My Dear (tāta)! Tell me why you came to have this body (of a crow). Please explain to me everything concerning it¹. (3)

And besides this, oh Lord Bird (“svāmī -- nabhagāmī”—literally, the one who can travel in the sky, obviously meaning a ‘bird’), the other question that I have is: From where did you find the wonderful and beautiful symbolic ‘lake’ that is filled with the nectar of spiritual bliss and joy provided by Ram Charit Manas, the divine, sacred and holy story that describes the life, time and deeds of Lord Ram, the Supreme Being, during his sojourn on earth as a human being (rāma carita sara)²? (4)

[Note—¹Garud wondered: “I am absolutely confounded as to why you became a ‘crow’ out of all forms of living beings—in spite of all your wonderful virtues, and you being so favoured by Lord Ram. It’s astonishing that a sage of your exalted stature should be condemned to be crow because this form of the body is not very respectable by any means. I can’t understand the reason for this inconsistency—that a great soul like you would become a lowly crow instead of having some other form that would have been in line with your exalted spiritual stature. So please be gracious and kind to shed more light on the two questions I have asked you.”

²The way Garud addressed Kaagbhusund is remarkable. He calls Kaagbhusund as a “nabhagāmī”—one who can move through the sky like a bird. To clarify that he means no insult to Kaagbhusund, he has also used the word ‘Lord’ (svāmī) for him.

Then he likens Ram Charit Manas to a beautiful ‘lake’ (rāma carita sara). Well, when a bird flies high in the sky, it is able to see a large area of tract of land below. It sees many rivers, lakes, ponds etc. as it traverses through the sky. Such a panoramic view is not possible by a land-bound creature. The bird stops at many rivers and lakes to refresh during its flight. So it has the chance to taste the waters of countless water bodies. Then some lucky bird would discover a lake full of the crystal clear water.

In spiritual context, the beautiful lake that contains the ambrosia of life which Kaagbhusund discovered is in the form of the divine, sacred and holy story of Lord Ram that is known as Ram Charit.

Garud means that so many great sages and seers have been searching a source of spiritual bliss and joy down the ages, but it was Kaagbhusund who discovered it in the form of Ram Charit. So Garud wished to know how he managed to find it.

In practical terms, this is what may have happened in that ancient period of time: Kaagbhusund was a crow by his physical body, though he was a highly self-

realised, spiritually enlightened and a wise soul, one who was a kindred spirit who could distinguish between his gross body which was his 'non-true self', and his pure conscious Atma that was his 'true self'. Though he was a crow by birth, he did not live like an ordinary bird engaged in the routine affairs of life in this mundane world, and instead chose to lead a life like that of a hermit and an ascetic, a life of meditation, penance and austerities, a peaceful and serene life in the upper reaches of the Himalayas, the mountain range where great sages and seers went to get spiritual solace and peace, surrounded by the calmness and the beauty of Nature.

Being a 'bird', Kaagbhusund could fly high in the sky, and this was a boon for him for he used to soar high and glide in the sky above the mountain range in search of places where he would find some great sage or hermit observing spiritual practices so that he could pay his obeisance to him and draw inspiration. Once upon a time he happened to fly atop Mt. Kailash on the bank of the pristine pure lake known as Mansarovar. This place is said to be the terrestrial abode of Lord Shiva where the Lord dwelt with Parvati. Seeing the lake of calm and crystal clear water, Kaagbhusund descended to take a dip in it and freshen himself, and to his amazement he discovered that Lord Shiva was telling some esoteric story to his consort Parvati somewhere nearby. So he quietly sat down and listened attentively. Shiva observed him but did not shoo him away as the Lord found that Kaagbhusund was very focused in his attention and was listening to the rendering of this holy and divine with all the signs of devotion and love for it, such as he had tears in his eyes, his ears stood on their ends so as to not miss a single word, his face glowed with joy and delight, and his his body was so thrilled that his feathers stood on their ends.

Thus, the nomenclature 'Ram Charit Sara' honours the 'lake' called Mansarovar on the banks of which Kaagbhusund had heard this divine and blessed story of Lord Ram known as 'Ram Charit' that is spiritually liberating and a provider of bliss and freedom from all the sufferance to which a creature is subjected to in life in this mundane mortal world.]

नाथ सुना मैं अस सिव पाहीं । महा प्रलयहुँ नास तव नाहीं ॥ ५ ॥
मुधा बचन नहिं ईस्वर कहई । सोउ मोरें मन संसय अहई ॥ ६ ॥

nātha sunā mair̥m asa siva pāhīm. mahā pralayahum̐ nāsa tava nāhīm. 5.
mudhā bacana nahim̐ īsvara kaha'ī. sō'u mōrēm mana sansaya aha'ī. 6.

Oh Lord (nātha)! I have heard from Lord Shiva that you do not perish even during the Great Deluge of the Dooms-day (mahā pralayahum̐)¹. (5)

The Lord God ("īsvara"—i.e. Lord Shiva) does not speak a lie, so this has perplexed me and has created a doubt in my mind. [Why? The reason is given in the next verse herein below.] (6)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 57. The same idea is expressed in (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 88; and (ii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 96.]

अग जग जीव नाग नर देवा । नाथ सकल जगु काल कलेवा ॥ ७ ॥
अंड कटाह अमित लय कारी । कालु सदा दुरतिक्रम भारी ॥ ८ ॥

aga jaga jīva nāga nara dēvā. nātha sakala jagu kāla kalēvā. 7.
aṇḍa kaṭāha amita laya kārī. kālu sadā duratikrama bhārī. 8.

Oh Lord (nātha)! This is because all the creatures in this mortal world, whether they are the Nagas (pronounced as “Nāgās”; subterranean creatures; literally the serpents), the human beings (no matter how exalted, resourceful, powerful and mighty they are), the gods (of heaven who are deemed to be eternal because they have a very long life as compared to the human race), and all other denominations of creatures, movable and immovable (such as animals and plants respectively)—all of them are devoured by Death; none of them is spared by the Jaws of Time; all invariably become a victim of Kaal (sakala jagu kāla kalēvā). (7)

The factor of Kaal (the effects of time and circumstance; death, decay and destruction; end or conclusion of life) is so formidable and invincible that it spares none—it annihilates and destroys countless and the greatest of universes.

[To wit, I just can’t understand how you become immune to the laws of Kaal; how you managed to escape its clutches when it spares none?] (8)

सो०. तुम्हहि न व्यापत काल अति कराल कारन कवन ।
मोहि सो कहहु कृपाल ग्यान प्रभाव कि जोग बल ॥ ९४ (क) ॥
sōraṭhā.

tumhahi na byāpata kāla ati karāla kārana kavana.
mōhi sō kahahu kṛpāla gyāna prabhāva ki jōga bala. 94 (a).

What is the reason that Kaal (the effects of time and circumstances; death, decay and destruction) does not prevail upon you, it does not affect you though it is extremely cruel and invincible as well as unsparing and unforgiving by its inherent nature¹.

Oh merciful Lord, please tell me what is the reason for you having this immunity from Kaal—is it due to the protective shield of the stupendous spiritual wisdom and knowledge that you have, or is this immunity obtained by you on the strength of Tapa (austerity and penance) that you do? (Sortha no. 94-a)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 57; (ii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 88; and (iii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 96.]

दो०. प्रभु तव आश्रम आएँ मोर मोह भ्रम भाग ।
कारन कवन सो नाथ सब कहहु सहित अनुराग ॥ ९४ (ख) ॥
dōhā.

prabhu tava āśrama ā'ēm̐ mōra mōha bhrama bhāga.
kāraṇa kavana sō nātha saba kahahu sahita anurāga. 94 (b).

When I came to your lordship's hermitage, all my delusions and confusions ran away (vanished) automatically on their own¹.

Oh Lord (nātha)! Be kind and affectionate towards me and tell me the reason for it. [Please be kind to explain to me why I had experienced these wonderful and amazing phenomena.]' (Doha no. 94-b)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 64. It is just like the case of darkness immediately vanishing with the appearance of any source of light, for example a candle or the sun. The presence of the saintly soul Kaagbhusund endowed the hermitage with a positively charged environment of spiritualism and holiness that would instantly neutralise all the negative things that may come near it, such as delusions and confusions.]

चौ०. गरुड़ गिरा सुनि हरषेउ कागा । बोलेउ उमा परम अनुरागा ॥ १ ॥
धन्य धन्य तव मति उरगारी । प्रस्न तुम्हारि मोहि अति प्यारी ॥ २ ॥
caupāī.

garuṇa girā suni haraṣē'u kāgā. bōlē'u umā parama anurāgā. 1.
dhan'ya dhan'ya tava mati uragārī. prasna tumhāri mōhi ati pyārī. 2.

[Continuing his narration to his consort Uma, Lord Shiva told said to her—] “Listen Uma, when the Crow (Kaagbhusund) heard the words of Garud, he felt exhilarated. He (Kaagbhusund) replied very affectionately --- (1),

‘Oh the Enemy of Serpents (uragārī)! You are blessed, and so is your intellect. I love to hear your question; it has pleased me a lot. [And therefore I shall answer them cheerfully and willingly.]’¹ (2)

[Note—¹This is the reason why Kaagbhusund felt exhilarated when Garud posed his questions to him, and this is also the reason why he is ready to answer them cheerfully and affectionately. Why was Kaagbhusund so happy to hear Garud ask him about the source of his eternity?

It made Kaagbhusund nostalgic; he recollected some glorious events of his past life that filled him with joy and reminded him how blessed he had been.]

सुनि तव प्रस्न सप्रेम सुहाई । बहुत जनम कै सुधि मोहि आई ॥ ३ ॥
सब निज कथा कहउँ मैं गाई । तात सुनहु सादर मन लाई ॥ ४ ॥

sunī tava prasna saprēma suhāī. bahuta janama kai sudhi mōhi āī. 3.
saba nija kathā kaha'um̐ maiṁ gāī. tāta sunahu sādara mana lāī. 4.

After hearing your question asked most politely and affectionately, I have recollected the events of many of my past lives. [And this has thrilled me and made me nostalgic.] (3)

Well now, I shall tell you all about my history in detail. Oh Dear (tāta)! Listen to it attentively, with due respect and regard¹. (4)

[Note—¹It's interesting to note that Kaagbhusund has asked Garud to hear about the former's life with 'due respect and regard'. He means to warn Garud not to take it lightly and be sceptical about its truthfulness. The story may seem a bit odd and unconventional, so it should not be mocked at and ridiculed, for it is true and real, and no cock-and-bull self-praise story of wild imagination! Showing disrespect to it would be tantamount to showing doubt to Kaagbhusund, the honourable preacher, and to Lord Ram as well because the story about Kaagbhusund's past inherently incorporates the glory and greatness of the Lord in it.]

जप तप मख सम दम ब्रत दाना । बिरति बिबेक जोग बिग्याना ॥ ५ ॥

सब कर फल रघुपति पद प्रेमा । तेहि बिनु कोउ न पावइ छेमा ॥ ६ ॥

japa tapa makha sama dama brata dānā. birati bibēka jōga bigyānā. 5.
saba kara phala raghupati pada prēmā. tēhi binu kō'u na pāva'i chēmā. 6.

Doing various and myriads of meritorious deeds and practicing so many religious exercises such as Japa (repetition of holy Mantras which are esoteric spiritual formulas, or muttering of prayers), Tapa (penance; austerity), Yagya (fire sacrifices), Sama and Dama (practicing equanimity and self-control of the mind and the sense organs), Vrat (observing strict sacred vows and religious restrictions), Daan (making charity; donation; giving of alms), Virati or Vairagya (renunciation; detachment; dispassion), Vivek (wisdom, right thinking and judgement, discrimination), Yoga (meditation, reflection and contemplation), Vigyan (spiritual wisdom and enlightenment), and all other such practices and observances --- (5),

--- The only worthwhile eclectic reward, the only worthwhile spiritual merit and the only worthwhile mystical benefit that accrue to a person by doing countless auspicious deeds and undertaking various religious or spiritual exercises as enumerated above, is only one—and it is have affection for the holy feet of Lord Ram.

[To wit, if a person fails to develop affection, devotion and faith in the holy feet of Lord Ram then all the exercises listed herein above go to waste.]

Verily indeed, in all sooth and without gainsay, one cannot have any worthwhile merit nor attain any gain by way of liberation and deliverance without having faith, devotion and affection for the holy feet of Lord Ram¹. (6)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no 4 that precedes Doha no. 84—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 85; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 115; (iii) Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precede Doha no. 119; (iv) Chaupai line nos. 7-19 that precede Doha no. 122]

एहिं तन राम भगति मैं पाई । ताते मोहि ममता अधिकाई ॥ ७ ॥
जेहि तें कछु निज स्वारथ होई । तेहि पर ममता कर सब कोई ॥ ८ ॥

ēhim tana rāma bhagati mair̥m pā'ī. tātē mōhi mamatā adhikā'ī. 7.
jēhi tēm kachu nija svāratha hō'ī. tēhi para mamatā kara saba kō'ī. 8.

I was fortunate and lucky to have gained access to the glorious virtue of Bhakti (devotion) for Lord Ram with this body (of a crow), and this is why I am so fond of it; this is why I prefer it over other better forms that the soul can assume in this world¹. (7)

Anything by which one derives some special benefit and attains one's cherished objective in life naturally becomes dear to him.

[To wit, since I got the fruit of having Bhakti for Lord Ram with this body of a crow, I began to respect it and prefer it over all other forms my soul could have assumed.]² (8)

[Note—¹It is clearly mentioned by Kaagbhusund that he was blessed by Lord Ram himself with the virtue of having Bhakti when he had gone in the form of a crow to play with the Lord during his childhood days. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 89.

Since he attained nearness with his beloved Lord with the body of a crow, as well as was blessed in this form of a crow, he became very fond of this form.

²As we move ahead with the reading of the past lives of Kaagbhusund, we shall see that in one of his previous lives he was a human being, but he wasn't blessed by the virtue of Bhakti for Lord Ram then. He was blessed with this boon only when he became a crow. So therefore, Kaagbhusund decided that the body of a crow was most useful for him as he had developed Bhakti for Lord Ram with this body.

Further, as we have already read earlier, it was in the form of a crow that Kaagbhusund could have unrestricted access to Lord Ram and play with the Lord when he was a child. He hopped around the Lord and stayed for five long years to enjoy the Lord's company as no one suspected who he actually was as everyone thought that the child Ram had become fond of a crow with which he wanted to play. So no one in the palace chased the crow away. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 75—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 89.

Had Kaagbhusund been a human or any other form that is regarded as better and more honourable as compared to being a crow which is a contemptible bird, this privilege of being able to play and keep close company with Lord Ram for five long years without being asked to leave would not have been possible at all.]

सो०. पन्नगारि असि नीति श्रुति संमत सज्जन कहहि ।

अति नीचहु सन प्रीति करिअ जानि निज परम हित ॥ ९५ (क) ॥

sōraṭhā.

pannagāri asi nīti śruti sammata sajjana kahahim.
ati nīcahu sana prīti kari'a jāni nija parama hita. 95 (a).

Oh Enemy of Serpents (“pannagāri”—i.e. Garud)! It is a well established maxim of the Vedas and even those who are wise and prudent in the world have endorsed the view that one should be courteous towards and show affection for even the meanest and the lowliest of creatures in the world if it is found that friendship with the latter serves one's own interest and purpose¹. (Sortha no. 95-a)

[Note—¹As we move along in the reading of the text of Ram Charit Manas we come across many such priceless gems of wisdom and prudent advice embedded in its text that would stand in good stead in our personal lives. Presently this maxim and axiom is of great practical value for all of us in our dealings with others in the humdrum world, and it would come handy when we are faced with a situation where we are not certain whether or not to befriend a particular person. The guiding principle is to see if having relations with the opposite party would serve our interests, and if the answer is ‘yes’ then other things such as his social standing, cast, creed, beliefs, ethnicity and other such things can be put aside. Say, what good is a person who is of a high stature and may possess excellent qualities if he is of no help to us when we face adversities and need a true friend to give us support?

This is the reason why Lord Ram had willingly befriended monkeys and bears of Kishkindha, as well as even the brother of his demon enemy (i.e. Vibhishan, the brother of Ravana, the demon king of Lanka, who had abducted the Lord's wife Sita) though they were not upto the standard that would qualify them for becoming friends with the Lord: all of them had whole-heartedly helped Lord Ram to successfully complete his mission of finding Sita and releasing her from her captors.

Another thing we learn from the example of Lord Ram is that when such lowly and humble creatures come to someone's aid in times of adversities and need, then that person should always remain obliged and grateful to his benefactors, and not be selfish to turn his back as soon as the objective of creating friendship is fulfilled.

Lord Ram did not hesitate or feel shy to bring his friends such as the monkeys, the bears and even the deomon represented by Vibhishan to his capital of Ayodhya when he came back after the fourteen years of forest sojourn, to openly acknowledge their help and contribution to his mission of vanquishing the cruel demons, and to declare that they are all his dear friends and as dear to him as his own brother Bharat who was extremely dear to the Lord as he had even forgone the chance to ascend the throne of Ayodhya in the absence of the Lord inspite of the fact that every single minister of the kingdom has insisted that he should.]

पाट कीट तें होइ तेहि तें पाटंबर रुचिर ।

कृमि पालइ सबु कोइ परम अपावन प्रान सम ॥ ९५ (ख) ॥

pāṭa kīṭa tēm hō'i tēhi tēm pāṭambara rucira.
kṛmi pāla'i sabu kō'i parama apāvana prāna sama. 95 (b).

The silk thread is produced by a silk-worm which is by all means a lowly creature, not someone of a high stature and worthy of praise that people would feel pride to befriend. But since it produces a fine thing called ‘silk’ from which exceptionally

beautiful and valuable clothes are made, the humble worm is coveted and feted by all, it is liked by everyone, it is dear to all like one would love one's own life, and no one deems it to be contemptible and treats it with disdain simply because it is a lowly and ugly 'worm'. (Sotha no. 95-b)

चौ०. स्वारथ साँच जीव कहूँ एहा । मन क्रम बचन राम पद नेहा ॥ १ ॥
 सोइ पावन सोइ सुभग सरीरा । जो तनु पाइ भजिअ रघुबीरा ॥ २ ॥
 caupāī.

svāratha sām̐ca jīva kahum̐ ēhā. mana krama bacana rāma pada nēhā. 1.
 sō'i pāvana sō'i subhaga sarīrā. jō tanu pā'i bhaji'a raghubīrā. 2.

{Now, what is the real or true self-interest of a living being? This is answered here—}

The real and true self-interest of all the Jivas (living beings) lies in cultivating, developing and promoting the virtue of having affection for the holy feet of Lord Ram¹ by employing all the faculties and functions of the body which are under one's command—i.e. by employing one's Mana (mind and heart combine), by doing Karma (auspicious deeds that are conducive to a person's well-being) and Bachan (words and speech—by way of praising the Lord, spreading his glories and values, and advising others to lead an auspicious spiritual way of life devoted to the Lord). (1)

That physical body of a Jiva is deemed to be good, praise-worthy and charming by which the Jiva is able to worship, adore and revere Lord Raghubir (i.e. Lord Ram), by which he can develop devotion and affection for the Lord². (2)

[Note—¹Having affection for the august feet of Lord Ram also includes in its ambit such virtues as having devotion, faith and belief in the Lord and his divinity and holiness.

These virtues serve a Jiva's true and real self-interest as they give his soul spiritual peace and bliss that has depth in it; they make available to him the eclectic spiritual reward in the form of finding liberation and deliverance from the endless cycle of miseries and torments characteristic of this mundane world.

On the other hand, loving the world and its material things give joy that is only superficial in nature, for all joys and comforts derived from the gross world are as transient as the world itself. They only entangle the creature in a web of miseries and sufferings that would actually rob whatever traces of happiness and peace that the creature already has.

²To wit, even if a creature has got a most lowly form of body, say for instance like that of a crow as in the case of Kaagbhusund himself, but still he is able to develop devotion and love for Lord Ram through this body, then it is worth to have it as it becomes an instrument for attaining eternal peace, bliss and joy for the creature's soul; it becomes a vehicle by which the Jiva can find liberation and deliverance for its soul.

Here, when a reference is made to the living being, his 'true self called the Atma' is being meant. This Atma is the 'true self' and the 'soul' of all living beings. The Atma is pure consciousness that lives inside the gross physical body of a creature.

Hence, that ‘gross body’ which helps the creature to do something that would help to free its Atma from the trap in which it has found itself is the creature’s “true friend”. And like a ‘true friend’, the creature loves such a body, though otherwise this body may be, on its surface, unholy and not worthy of any praise.

As we see in the case of Kaagbhusund, he loves to have a physical body of a ‘crow’ as he has found the spiritual nectar by way of devotion and love for Lord God through the means of the body of a crow, no matter how lowly, contemptible and unholy it may be otherwise.

The importance of Bhakti and its significance for the spiritual welfare of a creature has been stressed by Kaagbhusund elsewhere also during his conversation with Garud which is in the form of a spiritual discourse. For instance, refer to: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no 4 that precedes Doha no. 84—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 85; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precede Doha no. 119; and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 7-19 that precede Doha no. 122.]

राम बिमुख लहि बिधि सम देही । कबि कोबिद न प्रसंसहिं तेही ॥ ३ ॥
राम भगति एहिं तन उर जामी । ताते मोहि परम प्रिय स्वामी ॥ ४ ॥

rāma bimukha lahi bidhi sama dēhī. kabi kōbida na prasansahim tēhī. 3.
rāma bhagati ēhim tana ura jāmi. tātē mōhi parama priya svāmī. 4.

If a Jiva (living being) accepts a grand body which is as majestic, exalted and exceptional in qualities as that possessed by Vidhi (i.e. the senior most of the Trinity of Gods, the creator Brahma, the writer of the Vedas and all the laws governing this creation), but if that body is opposed to Lord Ram (i.e. it does not have devotion, affection, faith and reverence for Lord Ram, it does not worship the Lord and offers obeisance to him)—then those who have spiritual wisdom and are enlightened do not praise such a body (in spite of its greatness and majesty, and its possession of other virtues and qualities)¹. (3)

Oh Lord (“svāmī”—i.e. Garud)! Since the glorious and eclectic spiritual virtues of devotion, affection, reverence and faith for Lord Ram (rāma bhagati) sprouted in this body of mine (which externally is like that of a ‘crow’), I am very fond of it; it is very dear to me². (4)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 86 where precisely the same thing is said.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 95; and (ii) from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 83—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 85.

Kaagbhusund, the saintly ‘crow’, had gone to play with Lord Ram during the Lord’s childhood days. The Lord was very pleased with him and had blessed him with the virtue of having eternal ‘Bhakti’ (devotion) for the Lord at that time. So, Kaagbhusund says that he is very fond of his present body of a ‘crow’.]

तजउँ न तन निज इच्छा मरना । तन बिनु बेद भजन नहिं बरना ॥ ५ ॥
 प्रथम मोहँ मोहि बहुत बिगोवा । राम बिमुख सुख कबहुँ न सोवा ॥ ६ ॥

taja'um̃ na tana nija icchā maranā. tana binu bēda bhajana nahir̃m baranā. 5.
 prathama mōham̃ mōhi bahuta bigōvā. rāma bimukha sukha kabahum̃ na
 sōvā. 6.

It is upon me to decide when I shall die (as Lord Ram has blessed me with an eternal life)¹, but still I don't want to discard this body of a 'crow' because the Vedas have asserted that one cannot physically worship and offer obeisance to Lord Ram without a physical body². (5)

Earlier, Moha (worldly attachments and infatuations; delusions in all its myriad manifestations) had had the better of me; it made me hallucinate and subjected me to a lot of horrors and miseries so much so that I had become virtually opposed or hostile to Lord Ram. The result was highly agonising for me and I could not even sleep in peace (i.e. I found no rest and succour from my troubles and tribulations)³. (6)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 88 where Lord Ram has granted this boon to Kaagbhusund.

²To wit, since it is not possible to worship, to offer obeisance and prayer to, and to sing the glories of Lord Ram and to have devotion for the Lord without the aid of a physical body, I need to have a body so that I am able to derive immense spiritual joy, pleasure and comfort by practicing these things. That is why I prefer not to die and shed this body of a 'crow' though it is not a holy form for the soul to have and neither is it praise worthy by any account.

³Kaagbhusund would narrate the woes of his earlier lives in the following verses. Before becoming a crow due to a curse, he was a human being, and prior to that he had gone through the evolutionary process by taking many births and having many bodies. But he had never found spiritual peace, joy and bliss like he has found now when he is a crow.

This narration is given below from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 96 herein below—to Doha no. 114.]

नाना जनम कर्म पुनि नाना । किए जोग जप तप मख दाना ॥ ७ ॥
 कवन जोनि जनमेउँ जहँ नाहीं । मैं खगोस भ्रमि भ्रमि जग माहीं ॥ ८ ॥

nānā janama karma puni nānā. ki'ē jōga japa tapa makha dānā. 7.
 kavana jōni janamē'um̃ jaham̃ nāhīr̃m. mair̃m khagēsa bhrami bhrami jaga
 māhīr̃m. 8.

In my countless previous births I had done myriads of spiritual practices such as Yoga (meditation), Japa (repetition of holy Mantras or formulas and prayers), Tapa (austerity and penance), Yagya (fire sacrifices) and Daan (charity)¹. (7)

Which is that form or body that I had not taken birth in during my aimless wonderings in this mortal world of transmigration²? I had wondered in all the possible wombs (i.e. I had taken births in all possible forms that a living being can have in this world), and in each birth I remained mired in delusions that caused so much perplexities, doubts and confusions for me that I could never overcome them and remained perpetually trapped in this cycle. (8)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-5 that precede Doha no. 95.

²I had repeatedly died and taken birth in a new form as a Jiva, a creature or a living being with a gross mortal body. Each of my new form or birth was determined by the fiat of destiny, and the decision as to the sort of creature I would become in my next birth was influenced by the consequences of the deeds that I had done in my previous life before I died. In this way, I had travelled a long journey through all possible forms that exist in this world.]

देखेउँ करि सब करम गोसाईं । सुखी न भयउँ अबहिं की नाई ॥ ९ ॥
सुधि मोहि नाथ जन्म बहु केरी । सिव प्रसाद मति मोहँ न घेरी ॥ १० ॥

dēkhē'um' kari saba karama gōsā'īm. sukhī na bhaya'um' abahim kī nā'īm. 9.
sudhi mōhi nātha janma bahu kērī. siva prasāda mati mōham' na ghērī. 10.

Oh my Lord (“gōsā'īm”—i.e. Garud)! I have seen everything that is to be seen; I have done all possible deeds and taken all necessary actions in order to find peace for myself, but I failed miserably every time. I had never been as delighted, cheerful, blissful, joyous and happy as I am now (in the body of a crow)¹. (9)

Oh Lord (nātha)! I have a memory of many of my previous births (and I can vividly recall how unhappy I had been then) because, by the grace of Lord Shiva, my memory and understanding remained sharp, and my mind could not be clouded by forgetfulness and delirium². (10)

[Note—¹Why is it so? Kaagbhusund has himself answered this question in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 95—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 96.

It is because he has been blessed by the glorious virtue of having Bhakti for Lord Ram in his body of a crow. This single boon has provided him extreme solace, peace, joy, happiness, bliss, felicity and beatitude like he has never had before in any of his previous births.

²To wit, by Lord Shiva's grace and kindness, I have been blessed with a transcendental level of knowledge that enables me to know the events of my past lives. The great benefit of this knowledge of hindsight is that it keeps me warned of the danger of falling into the trap of worldly delusions and getting tempted by the illusionary joys, happiness, pleasures and comforts of the world. This knowledge of my sufferings of previous births helps me to remain focussed in my spiritual pursuit by not deviating from my path of Bhakti for Lord Ram. It prevents me from getting

attracted to and entangled by the world of sense objects and its illusionary charms. I know how I had been tormented all along in my previous lives when all my attempts to find peace yielded no result. But now this single element of ‘Bhakti’ has bestowed immense bliss and contentedness to me.]

दो०. प्रथम जन्म के चरित अब कहउँ सुनहु बिहगेस ।
सुनि प्रभु पद रति उपजइ जातें मिटहिं कलेस ॥ ९६ (क) ॥
dōhā.

prathama janma kē carita aba kaha'um'sunahu bihagēsa.
suni prabhu pada rati upaja'i jātēm miṭahim kalēsa. 96 (a).

Oh the King of Birds (“bihagēsa”—i.e. Garud)! Listen, now I shall tell you about the events of my first life. Hearing these events creates a natural sense of affection and dearness for the holy feet of the Lord (Sri Ram), and this in turn erases all sorts of miseries and torments that afflict a creature. (Doha no. 96-a)

पूरुब कल्प एक प्रभु जुग कलिजुग मल मूल ।
नर अरु नारि अधर्म रत सकल निगम प्रतिकूल ॥ ९६ (ख) ॥

pūruba kalpa ēka prabhu juga kalijuga mala mūla.
nara aru nāri adharma rata sakala nigama pratikūla. 96 (b).

Oh Lord (prabhu)! In the previous Kalpa (one round or circle of creation and destruction) there was an age known as ‘Kaliyug’¹. This age or era was characterised by a high level of perversion, lack of scruples, all-pervading sinfulness, vices and evil tendencies, moral turpitude, degradation and degeneration, and other such corrupt practices that overwhelmed all the creatures and became the dominant characteristic feature of all sorts of behaviour, attitude, thought and conduct during this period. All the men and women were not only highly sinful but were opposed to the Vedas as well, and they were averse to following the righteous and auspicious path shown by the scriptures. (Doha no. 96-b)

[Note—¹The cycle of creation, its development and final conclusion, known as a Kalpa, goes on and on endlessly. Each Kalpa is divided into four segments—Sata-Yug, Treta-Yug, Dwapar-Yug and Kaliyug. The Sata Yug was the period when ‘truth and righteousness’ were the dominant factors. It was the age of the Vedas and fire sacrifices. The fire destroys all impurities, even impure gold is put in the fire to purify it, so the practice of doing fire sacrifices was symbolic of this philosophy. The factor of ‘Dharma’—symbolising the grand virtues of truthfulness, auspiciousness, righteousness, probity, propriety and nobility of thought and conduct—was the dominant element in Sata Yug.

Besides the factor of Dharma, there was another measuring scale by which the ancient sages and seers marked the end of one Yug and the beginning of the next Yug—it was the level of the ‘Three Gunas’ or virtues, attitude and characters that

determined the behaviour and working of all creatures in a particular era known as Yug. These three Gunas are called 'Sata Guna', 'Raja Guna' and 'Tama Guna'.

The 'Sata Guna' has the elements of truthfulness, righteousness and auspiciousness as the dominant factor. It is the brightest and the holiest of all the three Gunas, and is characterised by all that is good, divine and sublime. The last of the three Gunas, i.e. the 'Tama Guna', as the name itself suggests, is marked by 'darkness and grossness' symbolising all the worst of negative traits that a creature can ever possess. The second Guna, i.e. the 'Raja Guna' lies in between; it has a mixture of the characters of the Sata Guna and the Tama Guna in varying proportions. The greater is the component of Sata Guna, the better is the creature that possesses the Raja Guna; the greater is the component of Tama Guna, the worse is the creature. The Raja Guna motivates the creature to do his job in this world, and how he does it and his take on it depends upon the ratio of the other two Gunas as they mix with the Raja Guna.

The two factors of 'Dharma' and 'Gunas' together determine in practice which Yug a particular time in the cycle of Kalpa is being referred to.

As time passed, the element of Dharma began to fade away or decline in a step-by-step manner, and its place was taken by 'A-Dharma', the opposite of Dharma. Similarly, the Sata Guna was gradually replaced by the Tama Guna, and so the Raja Guna also underwent change from its best to its worst. This transition was very subtle and gradual over a long period of time spreading centuries.

Therefore, when Dharma and Gunas reached a certain point, the end of Sata Yug came, and it was the beginning of the next era known as Treta Yug. As compared to Sata Yug, Dharma and Sata Guna were weaker in Treta Yug, but they were still stronger and more widespread as compared to the period of time when Treta ended and the third era known as Dwapar took over. So the decline and the downward slide of moral values and upholding of Truth continued unabated till we come to the point where Dwapar ended and the fourth era of Kaliyug took over.

By this gradual progression, a time would come when Dharma would become totally eclipsed and among the three Gunas it would be Tama Guna that would rule the roost. There would be widespread perversion, evil, sins, selfishness, short-sightedness, corruption etc. that would cause irreparable damage and destruction to the society and its moral fibre. Moral values and spiritual principles would be buried underground. The environment would be so polluted that it would make life horrifying to live, and natural resources would be so much exploited and depleted to such an extent that the earth won't be able to support life any longer. Metaphorically, it would be end of one Kalpa, and also the end of Kaliyug, the age in which we humans now live.

Remember: There was no physical demarcation line between any two Yugs; the change was gradual and almost imperceptible. Our ancient sages and seers decided to mark the end of one era and begin the calendar for the next era based on some yardstick or criterion to measure the level or quantum of Dharma and Gunas in a particular era.

There is a simple way to visualise how the Kalpa was divided into four Yugs. We have already read that the Kalpa represents a 'cycle' of creation, development and conclusion. Let us take the example of the 'moon' to understand the concept of the Kalpa and the four Yugs. Let us consider the rounded circular disc of the moon as being equivalent to a 'Kalpa'. The 'full moon' is bright and luminescent—and it resembles the purity and holiness of the Sata Yug. As the nights pass, this brightness and luminescence begin to diminish gradually. When 'one quarter' of the bright disc

of the moon gets hidden from view, it is like the beginning of the 'Treta Yug'. When the brightness of the moon's disc is reduced to a half, it is like the beginning of the 'Dwapar Yug'. And finally, when the last quarter of its brightness survives, it is like the beginning of the 'Kaliyug'.

Obviously, the last quarter of shining surface of the rounded disc of the moon is definitely dark and gloomy as compared to time when its disc was half bright. Similarly, the three-quarters of the bright disc cannot match the beauty and shine of the moon when its full disc is glowing with a bright and luminescent light.

Now, by-and-by the moon becomes completely dark and invisible. Then as if by magic it makes its appearance once again in the sky as if emerging from the dark void of the cosmos.

This analogy of the moon's disc changing in brightness, from the full moon to the new moon, would help one to understand how one round of life known as the Kalpa is divided into four segments called the Yugs depending upon the proportion of Dharma and Guna in it, and then how a new Kalpa starts at the end of the previous Kalpa after passage of some time.

Let us read a bit more about the celestial system of Measurement of Time and age that are classified into the four Yugs, the Kalpa and the Manvantar. References: (i) Vishnu Puran, Chapter 2, Canto 8, verse nos. 60-68; (ii) Tripadvibhut Maha-Naryan Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 3, paragraph nos. 8, 10-15.

(a) 1 *Kalpa* is equivalent to 1 day in the creator Brahma's total life span of 100 years. Each Kalpa consists of 1000 four-Yug cycles, called the 'Chatur Yugs'. The visible creation's one life-span consisting of this four-Yog cycle called the 'Chatur Yugs' is this one day of Brahma. At the end of this Chatur Yug, there would be dissolution or the so-called 'dooms-day' when everything would be submerged in water. Then the next phase of life consisting of the next four-Yug cycle would start.

(b) Each Kalpa (i.e. 1 day of Brahma's life) is also divided into 14 *Manvantars*, and each such Manvantars is ruled by one Manu, the first male. Therefore, 1 Manu rules over 71.42 (1000/4) four-Yug cycles.

We are now passing through the 51st year of Brahma's life, and our present Kaliyug belongs to the 7th Manvantar out of the 14 Manvantars, and its Manu is called Vaivasvata, and it is 28th Kaliyug of the four-Yug cycle.

In human years, 1 Kalpa is equivalent to 4.32 billion (4.32×10^9) years.

(c) Each 4-era cycle consists of the following *Yugs*—

(1) The *Satayug* is the first era of the 4-era Hindu cycle of creation and destruction. It is also called *Krityug* because elaborate rituals of fire sacrifices based on the Vedas were done during this phase, and hence it is often called the era of great Vedic fire sacrifices. It is equivalent to 4800 divine years of Gods, and 17,28,000 human years.

(2) The *Tretayug* is equivalent to 3600 divine years of Gods, and 12,96,000 human years. It is second era of the 4-era Hindu cycle of creation and destruction. It was during this Yug that Lord Ram manifested on earth as an incarnation of Vishnu, and it concluded when the Lord left the earth for his heavenly abode.

(3) The *Dwaparyug* is equivalent to 2400 divine years of Gods, and 8,64,000 human years. It is third era of the 4-era Hindu cycle of creation and destruction. It was during this Yug that Lord Krishna manifested on earth as an incarnation of Vishnu, and it concluded when the Lord left the earth for his heavenly abode.

(4) The *Kaliyug* is equivalent to 1200 divine years of Gods, and 4,32,000 human years. It is the current fourth era of the 4-era Hindu cycle of creation and

destruction. Out of it, roughly 5000-5500 years have elapsed. It would ultimately end with the great deluge or Domsday when the entire world would be drowned/submerged in water of the rising ocean.

The next Kalpa would come after that in cyclic form. This happens because at the fag end of Kaliyug, sins and evils would have reached such a crescendo that the Supreme Being no longer is able to tolerate it though he is most tolerant, magnanimous and forgiving, and decides to finally wind up the whole thing by punishing the world by clean sweeping the slate. Only the righteous and auspicious few survive who would become the progenitors of the next cycle.

There are four eras, called 'Yugs', in the celestial cycle of creation and annihilation according to the Hindu belief. These are no formal boundaries segregating any two individual eras as such, to distinguish one from the other. They coalesce and seamlessly merge one into the other. The transition from one era to another is smooth, it's almost like going up a hill station from the heated plains below—as we gradually ascend the slope of the mountain, the air gradually becomes cooler and purer. The moral conduct of the people, their standard of mind and intellect, their thought processes and ideals, their norms of behaviours and criterion to decide what is good and what is bad, their definition of righteousness, virtuousness, nobility, propriety, probity, ethics, morality, justice as well as emancipation, salvation, liberation, deliverance, devotion, worship and spiritualism etc.—all these and relevant other aspects determined the characteristics and general demeanours of a particular era or age. In this context, the first era called the 'Kritiyug' was considered the best and the ideal era. With the fall in standards and the gradual creeping in of evil, vices, perversions and other degrading and denigrating qualities which seeped into the moral fiber of the people, the first phase transformed into the second era called the 'Treta Yug'. It was in this era that Lord Ram took birth. The third era was 'Dwapar Yug'—the age of Lord Krishna, in which the legendary Mahabharata clan war between two clans was fought for most worldly of things. The present, the fourth and the last era, is called 'Kaliyug', and in this we live. As we can observe, a whole book can be written on the characteristic features of 'Kaliyug' and its people, the moral fabric and their way of thinking which is marked by selfishness, perversion and all the vices and evils which one can think of.

This short commentary is to highlight the fact that Sri Ram's reign in 'Tretayug' was different from the rest of the 'Yugs' which came after him. Surdas has clearly hinted at the gradual fall in moral standards when he says that 'the righteousness and virtuous conduct that characterized the earlier era called Kritiyug became a dominant and salient feature in people's life even in Treta Yug'. It was not a general law or norm of behaviour during Treta, but since the Lord Sri Ram himself had ascended the throne, such virtues did become a reality even when not expected.

Goswami Tulsidas has cited the various measurements of time in a Doha being a part of the invocational lines of Lanka Kand of his epic Ram Charit Manas, as well as in Dohawali as Doha no. 130. To quote—"Oh mind! Why don't you worship Lord Ram (the Viraat Purush, the cosmic Lord) whose bow resembles Kaal (the time factor and death or end of creation), and the arrows are like the various divisions (fractions) of time such as a Lava, a Nimesh, a Parmaan, a Yug (era or epoch), a Baras (year), and a Kalpa."

Now, let us see what these individual terms referring to various measurements of time technically mean. The smallest fraction of time is the *Parmaan*, i.e. the time

taken by light to pass through an atom, or the time taken by a photon to travel through an atom, or for an atom to oscillate.

The *Nimesh* is the time taken for the eyelid to close and open once.

The *Lav* is equivalent to 36 such Nimesh.

The *Jug* or *Yug* is an era or an epoch; it may consist of a hundred years or thousands of years. According to Hindu belief, one cycle of creation and destruction of the whole world consists of 4 Yugs—viz. the Sata Yug, the Treta Yug when Lord Ram was born, the Dwapar Yug when Lord Krishna came down to earth, and the Kali Yug which is the current era of the four Yug cycle. The ‘Kalpa’ is equivalent to 1 day in the life of Brahma, the creator; it is equal to 1000 four-Yug cycles.

The word *Kaal* has many connotations—it refers to death, an end, conclusion of what exists, a frame of time, a notion of time that is relative, creating the sense of present, the past and the future.

In practice, Tulsidas means that whatever or whoever that is born or created in this world is bound to die or come to an end. Nothing and no one is eternal and imperishable. Some exist for a fraction of time, some longer for many years, and some others for thousands of years. Even Brahma the creator has his life-span fixed and measured. There is an Upanishad known as Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad of the Atarva Veda tradition in which the life-span of Brahma is clearly defined in its Canto 3, paragraph nos. 8-9.

According to the *Shiva Puran*, the units of celestial time and the cycle of creation and conclusion is as follows—

The smallest unit of time is known as ‘Nimesha’. This is the amount of time it takes to blink. Fifteen Nimeshas make one ‘Kashtha’, and thirty kashtas are one ‘Kala’. Thirty Kalas make one ‘Muhurta’, and thirty Muhurtas are ‘One Day’. Thirty days are ‘One Month’. Each month is divided into ‘two lunar fortnights’—viz. the ‘Shukla-paksha’ (bright lunar fortnight) and the ‘Krishna-paksha’ (dark lunar fortnight). Six months are called an ‘Ayana’. There are thus two Ayanas in a year.

Three hundred and sixty human years are equivalent to one year for the gods.

The lengths of the four ‘Yugas’ (eras) are defined in terms of the years of the gods, not in terms of human years. There are four eras and their names are respectively Sata-yuga or Kritayuga, Tretayuga, Dvaparayuga and Kaliyuga.

The Satyayuga lasts for four thousand divine years; the Tretayuga for three thousand divine years; the Dvaparayuga for two thousand divine years; and the Kaliyuga for one thousand divine years. This adds up to ten thousand divine years.

The ‘Sandhyas’ and ‘Sandhyamshas’ are the intervening periods between the Yugas, and these add up to two thousand divine years.

Thus, the four Yugas taken together last for twelve thousand divine years.

In a ‘Kalpa’ (cycle of creation, development and conclusion), each of the four Yugas occurs a thousand times. A Kalpa has fourteen ‘Manvantaras’ (eras). In a Manvantara, each of the four Yugas thus occurs seventy one times.

One Kalpa corresponds to one day for Brahma. One thousand Kalpas are one of Brahma’s years. Eight thousand of Brahma’s years make one of Brahma’s Yugas. One thousand such Yugas make up one ‘Savana’, and Brahma lives for three thousand Savanas’. This period is known as a ‘Trivrita’.

During each of Vishnu’s days, one Brahma is born and dies. And during each of Shiva’s days, one Vishnu is born and dies.

We shall read below that Kaagbhusund is telling the story of his life when he was born as a Shudra (the lowest of the society) during one such period of Kaliyug. The narration extending from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 97—to Doha no. 103 would also highlight the characteristic of the age in which we also live. Upon close examination a discerning reader will find a lot of similarity in what Kaagbhusund says and the world in which he or she actually lives. But the overall gloomy picture has a bright ray of hope at the end of the dark tunnel, and this ray of hope is highlighted in Doha no. 103.]

चौ०. तेहिं कलिजुग कोसलपुर जाई । जन्मत भयउँ सूद्र तनु पाई ॥ १ ॥
सिव सेवक मन क्रम अरु बानी । आन देव निंदक अभिमानी ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

tēhiṁ kalijuga kōsalapura jā'ī. janmata bhaya'um' sūdra tanu pā'ī. 1.
siva sēvaka mana krama aru bānī. āna dēva nindaka abhimānī. 2.

In the particular Kaliyug I am talking about, I¹ had gone to take birth as a Shudra (the lowest rung in the hierarchy of society) in Kaushalpuri (Ayodhya). (1)

I was extremely devoted to Lord Shiva, and worshipped the Lord with all my faculties and abilities, employing my mind, my speech and my deeds. But unfortunately I used to be proud and haughty (of my devotion for Lord Shiva), and criticise other deities and gods². (2)

[Note—¹The pronoun 'I' here refers to the Atma, the soul that is the 'true identity' and 'true self' of any living being. This Atma is eternal and unchangeable as opposed to the gross body that changes from one life to another.

²Kaagbhusund would say that he is very devoted to Lord Shiva who is the best amongst the Gods. Therefore it meant he was wiser and knew more than others. This in effect meant that he would say that all of deities and gods are inconsequential and not worthy of respect and reverence as compared to Shiva. Now he regrets he shouldn't have done it because all the gods and deities are different forms of the same Supreme Being, and therefore criticising one of these forms is equivalent to insulting the Lord himself. But he acknowledges that he was so egoist and stubborn that he would not listen and mend his ways.]

धन मद मत्त परम बाचाला । उग्रबुद्धि उर दंभ बिसाला ॥ ३ ॥
जदपि रहेउँ रघुपति रजधानी । तदपि न कछु महिमा तब जानी ॥ ४ ॥

dhana mada matta parama bācālā. ugrabud'dhi ura dambha bisālā. 3.
jadapi rahē'um' raghupati rajadhānī. tadapi na kachu mahimā taba jānī. 4.

I was intoxicated by the pride of pelf, was most talkative, had a reckless mind and a savage intellect, and my heart was full of immense conceit and an enormous amount of hypocrisy. (3)

It is such a paradox and an irony of destiny that though I (took birth and) lived in the capital of Lord Ram (Raghupati), I did not realise its glory, its holiness, its spiritual value and its significance for the creature¹. (4)

[Note—¹Kaagbhusund said: “Though I lived in the holy city of Ayodhya where Lord Ram had once manifested during the Treta Yug, I was so deluded that I did not maintain the sanctity of the holy place, but foolishly treated it as any other ordinary place during Kaliyug, and so I indulged in evil behaviour unmindful of the grave mistake I am making. I mimicked others in the world around me, and behaved like so many fallen people do who have no regard to what is good and what is not.

I could have led a righteous life of devotion for Lord Ram, worshipping the Lord and making the best use of my time and life in a sanctified place that was once the abode of the Lord. But it is so regrettable that I lived a lowly life that had all the elements that lead to the downfall of the creature’s soul.”]

अब जाना मैं अवध प्रभावा । निगमागम पुरान अस गावा ॥ ५ ॥

कवनेहुँ जन्म अवध बस जोई । राम परायन सो परि होई ॥ ६ ॥

aba jānā mair̥m avadha prabhāvā. nigamāgama purāna asa gāvā. 5.

kavanēhum̐ janma avadha basa jōī. rāma parāyana sō pari hōī. 6.

[Though I did not realise it at that time, but—] Now I realise the glory and greatness of Ayodhya. The Vedas, the Tantras and the Purans have lauded the immensity of the spiritual value of Ayodhya when they say that --- (5)

--- If anyone takes birth in Ayodhya at any time of his journey through the countless cycles of birth and death that a creature passes through, it is sure that the person would become devoted to Lord Ram, worship the Lord and become dedicated to him (rāma parāyana)¹. (6)

[Note—¹The pilgrim place dedicated to Lord Ram, i.e. the city of Ayodhya, is full of temples and places dedicated to Lord Ram. The general environment of the place is soaked with elements of devotion, worship, reverence and adoration for Lord Ram. A person is bound to be affected by the environment in which he lives long, and so no matter if a person does not especially focus his attention on worshipping the Lord and doing service to him, he is sure to be spiritually positively affected by the air of religiosity and holiness that pervades everywhere in Ayodhya.

The place abounds in temples and shrines dedicated to Lord Ram, and they impart a halo of holiness to Ayodhya. Sound of bells chiming and ringing during various rituals, and repetition of prayers emanate from temples almost all through the day. The Lord’s holy name is chanted or silently repeated by the majority of the inhabitants even as they go about the routine affairs of their lives. Various religious events are held here and there, and the general air is marked by devotion and dedication for Lord Ram who is the presiding deity of the city.

This sort of holy environment prevalent in Ayodhya is in sharp contrast with the sounds and airs characteristic of humdrum life and commerce in other cities, though it is also true that as time is going by the aura of piety and holiness so

characteristic of Ayodhya of ancient times as described in the scriptures is on the wane as Kaliyug has slowly started raising its ugly hood even here.]

अवध प्रभाव जान तब प्रानी । जब उर बसहिं रामु धनुपानी ॥ ७ ॥
सो कलिकाल कठिन उरगारी । पाप परायन सब नर नारी ॥ ८ ॥

avadha prabhāva jāna taba prānī. jaba ura basahim rāmu dhanupānī. 7.
sō kalikāla kaṭhina uragārī. pāpa parāyana saba nara nārī. 8.

A living being (prānī) understands the real spiritual value of Ayodhya and benefits from it only when Lord Ram, who holds a bow in his hands, resides in his heart¹. (7)

Oh the Enemy of Serpents (“uragārī”—i.e. Garud)! That particular age of Kali (in which I was born as a Shudra in Ayodhya) was terribly horrifying. All men and women were indulgent in sins and perversities. (8)

[Note—¹It is clear that simply taking birth in Ayodhya won't serve any worthwhile spiritual purpose for a Jiva or living being if he does not have sincere and abiding devotion and affection for Lord Ram, if he is not dedicated to the Lord, if he does not worship, reveres and adores the Lord. A true devotee of the Lord would make his heart a veritable 'temple or a shrine' where he would consecrate the image of Lord Ram with a bow in hand as depicted in the scriptures, and once having done it he would worship the Lord like a person worships a deity in a temple.]

दो०. कलिमल ग्रसे धर्म सब लुप्त भए सदग्रंथ ।
दंभिन्ह निज मति कल्पि करि प्रगट किए बहु पंथ ॥ ९७ (क) ॥
dōhā.

kalimala grasē dharma saba lupta bha'e sadagrantha.
dambhinha nija mati kalpi kari pragaṭa ki'e bahu pantha. 97 (a).

The dark shadow of depravity, wickedness, sins, vices and evils that were prevalent in the age of Kali had eclipsed and engulfed all possible good virtues that are collectively called the principles of Dharma. All good books and scriptures had disappeared, and had become untraceable and inaccessible.

In place of the established auspicious and righteous path espoused by the scriptures and the principles of Dharma (that describe what is good and proper, and what is not), hypocrites, wicked people and imposters of pervert mentality had invented numerous religious dispensations, orders, creeds and sects out of their own fanciful wills and imaginations, proclaiming them to be sanctified and sacrosanct. (Doha no. 97-a)

भए लोग सब मोहबस लोभ ग्रसे सुभ कर्म ।
सुनु हरिजान ग्यान निधि कहउँ कछुक कलिधर्म ॥ ९७ (ख) ॥

bha'e lōga saba mōhabasa lōbha grasē subha karma.
 sunu harijāna gyāna nidhi kaha'um' kachuka kalidharma. 97 (b).

All the people were overcome by and had fallen prey to delusions and its inherent negativities. Excessive greed and rapacity had eclipsed all actions and deeds that are auspicious, righteous, pious and good.

Listen, oh the Mount of Lord Hari and the Wise One ("sunu harijāna, gyāna nidhi"—i.e. Garud)! Now I shall tell you about some of the unique features or peculiarities of Kaliyug that were deemed to be the rule rather than the exception during that period. (Doha no. 97-b)

चौ०. बरन धर्म नहिं आश्रम चारी । श्रुति बिरोध रत सब नर नारी ॥ १ ॥

द्विज श्रुति बेचक भूप प्रजासन । कोउ नहिं मान निगम अनुसासन ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

barana dharma nahim āśrama cārī. śruti birōdha rata saba nara nārī. 1.
 dvija śruti bēcaka bhūpa prajāśana. kō'u nahim māna nigama anusāsana. 2.

No one respects or follows the duties of their respective castes which are known as the 'four Varanas', nor do they obey the discipline expected of them during the four stages of life known as the 'four Ashrams'¹.

All men and women are opposed to the Vedas (ancient scriptures); they abhor them and do not follow any of their tenets, treating them with contempt and as mere heresy. (1)

The Brahmins (who are supposed to be teachers of the scriptures and their custodians) sell the Vedas.

[To wit, they use the Vedas to feed their stomachs, and acquire fame and wealth. Out of greed and selfish interests, they even tweak the tenets of the Vedas to please their patrons if the need arises. They have no compunctions about compromising on the sanctity of the Vedas, and they treat them as their inheritance which they are free to use in a manner that suits them, unconcerned whether their actions would undermine the authority, sanctity and holiness of the ancient scriptures.]

The Kings of the realm become blood-suckers; they do not treat their subjects as their dependants who ought to be shown compassion and mercy, but exploit them in any way they can, unmindful of their sufferings and miseries.

No one obeys and follows the tenets and discipline of the Vedas.

[To wit, people treat the Vedas as useless texts of no practical use; they deride them and mock at them; they treat them as books of heresy.] (2)

[Note—¹The four Varanas and the four Ashrams:

(A) The Hindu society has been divided into four sections or classes or segments or divisions by ancient sages for the sake of convenience and proper regulation of the huge society, for the purpose of its regulation and ease of its administration. These four divisions are called 'Varnas', and they are the following—Brahmins, Kshatriyas,

Vaishyas and Sudras. Members of each division have their role in society clearly marked and are expected to do their duties faithfully and diligently. Ancient sages and seers had envisioned this hierarchical system so that the society functions smoothly and each member knows what he or she is expected to do. This helps in proper administration and regulation of the society, proper maintenance of its law and order, as well as in fixing accountability.

It helped in judicious distribution of work to be done, to regulate the functioning of the society by delegation of authority and clearly specifying the jobs each section is supposed to do to maintain order and system in the world, to prevent overlapping of functions and avoid anarchy and chaos. This system helped in judicious regulation of the working of the society as a whole because each individual member of any given Varna knew what is expected of him. It helped in proper distribution of work that had to be done for day-to-day survival, without any duplicity and tussle.

But these four divisions were not water-tight compartments, and since their primary aim was maintenance and proper functioning of the society, these roles smoothly merged into one another at their meeting points.

For instance, though 'Brahmins' were primarily the elderly class well versed in the scriptures and assigned the job of acting as teachers, guides, advisors and preceptors, they were no bar for them to act as regents and warriors to protect others should the situation so demand.

The 'Kshatriya' was primarily responsible for giving protection to the society so that the rest of its members can carry out their duties without fear.

The society had to be fed and provided with material comfort and needs of daily life. This was the duty of the 'Vaishya' who was essentially of the trading community generating wealth and providing for the necessities of life.

But there should be someone who will attend to manual labour and serve the society so that its other members are freed from the grind of humdrum affairs of life to carry out their own duties. These were the 'Sudras'. They did manual work which we ordinarily call a servant's job. All types of tradesmen, craftsmen, smiths etc, such as washermen, carpenters, blacksmiths, farmers, herdsmen, boatmen, and countless other vocations and professions that made the society's wheel running and well-oiled were classified as 'Sudra'. The scriptures call them the 'foot of the man' in the sense that just as a man can't stand up to do anything or go anywhere without his legs, the society won't be able to stand up and function without the help of Sudras. It is obvious that the term 'Sudra' was not meant to demean or degrade any member of the society at large, for in fact they formed the base or foundation upon which the society stood and functioned without having to worry about physical support by way of manual labour that can help the Brahmin, the Kshatriya and the Vaishya perform their duties properly.

As will be clearly observed by the above reading, our ancient forefathers and patriarchs had been wise and prudent in establishing this four segment hierarchical system in society. Otherwise, there is utter chaos and anarchy in society due to dominance of evil influences of Kaliyug. It is just like misgovernance in a country when the administrative machinery collapses and there is complete mayhem everywhere.

So we see that there are four castes in the society according to Hinduism. They are the "Brahmins" who are at top end of this hierarchy and are principally ordained to act as teachers and moral guides; the "Kshatriyas" who are at the second rung and are tasked with the job of protecting the rest of the society from physical danger from

enemies, and maintain the rule of law and order through the rank and file of society; the “Vaishyas” who are assigned the task of looking after the material and financial affairs of the society; and the “Shudras” who are required to serve the rest of the members of the society so that they are freed to carry on their assigned duties as outlined above.

The “Chandaals” are at the lowest rung, and are usually assigned the task of carrying out the last rites of a dead person. They live outside villages. Since they deal with dead bodies, they also perform some other jobs that no one else would be willing to do—such as skinning of dead animals and using their hides for use, such as making of shoes and cover for war-shields etc.; they work in tanneries, as butchers and as cobblers.

Now let us delve a little deeper and understand more about them. As stated above, these four sections of the society are the following—(a) Brahmins*—the learned and teaching class; a wise one well-versed in the knowledge of the ultimate Truth about the supernatural Being called Brahm. They also presided over religious functions as priests, because these functions were central to life in the Vedic period; (b) Kshatriyas—they were the warrior, fighting, kingly class. They were assigned the job of giving protection to the society, dispensing justice and maintaining general law and order. (c) Vaishyas—they were the trading and farming class responsible for commerce and wealth generation. They provided for the necessities for a comfortable life. And finally (d) the Shudras—the service class of people whose main function was to free the other three classes from the humdrums of daily chores and concentrate their energies to the particular jobs assigned to those classes to which they belonged.

In ancient Indian tradition, the kings and the ruling class belonged to the caste called ‘Kshatriya’, and their main job/vocation was giving protection and providing sustenance to their subjects belonging to the other three castes. To do this, they had to wage wars—some in defense and some in aggression because they wanted to expand their area of influence. But wars nevertheless involved bloodshed which any peace loving soul of Satwic tendency would abhor. So a king could be Satwic by temperament but Rajsic by occupation and compulsion. Those who were Satwic were prescribed the non-violent method of worship and sacrifices to Goddess Durga during peace times as described in *Devipurana Mahabagwat*, Canto 46, verse nos. 15-17½, while those of Rajsic bearings were to do worship requiring animal sacrifices as described in verse nos. 17-21, especially in preparation for and during wars. Even today it is observed that the army is non-vegetarian in its food habits because the soldiers cannot kill their enemies in battle—as is required of them because of their vocation as a soldier—if they avoid killing and instead show mercy and compassion on their enemies. Perhaps this is the reason why meat-eating is never looked down in army; in fact, it is a normal diet amongst the Kshatriya class. Though mercy and compassion are indeed supremely good qualities, they are not meant for the battlefield unless the enemy surrenders and relents. The world would have been a ‘heaven-on-earth’ if this quality prevailed in the battlefield! However, since Sri Ram was at war with a vicious, unforgiving, cruel and formidable enemy (Ravana), and a lot was at stake (e.g. the very existence of the world and its peace), and it was a no-holds-barred, fierce and uncompromising war, the second category of worship—animal sacrifice symbolising the death of the enemy—was prescribed for him by the Goddess. And this was precisely what Brahma and other Gods did as is evident in verse nos. 33.

Yajur Veda 31st Chapter, 11th Mantra says that Brahmins are the mouth of society, the Kshatriyas are its arms, Vaishyas are its stomach or abdomen, and Shudras are its legs. The body is regarded as a symbol of the society. As is obvious in

this analogy, all these four units of the body must function properly and in close cooperation with each other in order that the body can survive and live comfortably and carry on with its assigned duties in an orderly fashion. The mouth is important because it is the medium by which the body takes food and speaks; the arms procure food and gives protection to the body against enemies; the stomach digests food and supplies the whole body with the energy needed by it; the abdomen holds all the internal organs; and the legs carry the body wherever it wants to go such as the place where food is available. Since food is the basis necessity of life, this instance is cited here. And the logic can be extended to everything else. Each component of the society must work properly in order that the whole society survives; each component is as vital as the other; each has its own importance in the bigger picture.

As time passed, by and by, the Kshatriya class had become very haughty and arrogant because all physical powers and military strength were vested in it. The king's treasury was supposed to be a common pool where the society could keep its wealth that it generates by toil, and the king was merely its custodian. But as time passed, the kings began to treat this treasury as their personal property, and while they rolled in luxury the peasant class, the working class that toiled day in and day out to generate this wealth hadn't a square meal to dump in their empty tummies and a roof to cover them against the vagaries of cruel Nature. Though the powers and wealth of the Kshatriya class were meant for the welfare of the society as a whole, more often than not these elements went to the head of kings, making them arrogant, haughty, exploitative and insensitive towards others.

We read about an incarnation of Lord Vishnu in the form of sage Parashuram who had eliminated the Kshatriya race several times over by killing them and handing over the earth to the Brahmins. The elimination of such wild kings belonging to the Kshatriya Varna who had deviated from their duties and moral responsibilities that were ordained by ancient sages and seers became obligatory for the Supreme Lord of the world as the Lord was the Father of all, and he could not bear with one of his offsprings making others suffer because of his own pervert behaviour and selfishness. Hence, the Lord assumed the form of sage Parashuram to teach a lesson to such wicked kings who had fallen from their paths.

Killing such Kshatriya kings and restoring the earth to Brahmins should be viewed in this context; it has a great symbolic meaning. Whenever evil tendencies and negativity rises in this world, be it in the guise of demons or kings, the Lord comes down to set the house in order. This is the reason why sage Parashuram is regarded as one of the many incarnations of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Lord of the world.

The logical spin-off of this is that Lord Ram and sage Parashuram are both the same Lord in different roles. What Lord Ram did for the welfare of sages and the humble creatures of the world by killing their tormentor demons led by Ravana of Lanka, sage Parashuram did the same thing by killing arrogant and wicked Kshatriya kings and handing over the world to pious and holy men known as Brahmins.

*The salient features of Brahmins are the following—they should possess these noble qualities—(1) 'Riju'-be expert in the Rig and the Yajur Vedas, (2) 'Tapa'-should be involved in doing penances, observing austerities and enduring sufferings for the welfare of the soul and the society, (3) 'Santosh'-be contented and satisfied, (4) 'Kshamaa'-to be forgiving and tolerant, (5) 'Sheel'-to have such virtues as good character, dignity, decorum and virtuousness, (6) 'Jitendriya'-to have self control over the sense organs, (7) 'Data'-to be a giver, one who sacrifices his own interests for the

benefit of others, (8) 'Gyani'-one who is well learned, wise, enlightened and erudite, (9) 'Dayaalu'-to be merciful and compassionate. [Shatpath Brahman.]

This word 'Brahmin' is too often misunderstood and misinterpreted to mean a particular member of the society who is supposed to be given respect, no matter what his moral and educational standard is. The real intention is not that even a corrupt, unwise, morally depraved and foolish person should be honoured just because he is born a 'Brahmin'. The intention of the scriptures is never this. In ancient times this was the class of people who were designated to study the scriptures and act as moral and practical guide to the rest of the society. This was envisioned by our ancestors to help regulate the functioning of the society in an orderly manner by dividing the entire working into four clear segments and delineating each segment with a list of duties its members were supposed to do. This prevented clash and duplicity of work, as each of the four classes knew what it is supposed to do. This in effect created a hierarchy in the society, with the learned ones who were known as the 'Brahmins' occupying the upper rung just like a patriarch of a large extended family who oversees the working and welfare of the entire family. A patriarch is an old man, and has the backing of years of experience behind him. Obviously he is the most competent man to give sane and rationale advice to the younger generation. This exactly was the role of the Brahmin.

Even in the modern world, a child is taught to give respect to his elders; its part of his moral education. Hence, 'paying respects to Brahmins' should be understood in the correct perspective.

An entire Upanishad called *Vajra-shuchiko-panishad*, belonging to the Sam Veda tradition is devoted to the subject. The eclectic virtues of Brahmins have been expounded in *Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad*, Canto 3, Brahman 5 as well as in Canto 3, Brahman 8, verse no. 10.

The *Param Hans Parivrajak Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, paragraph no. 7 describes in a holistic way the virtues of a true Brahmin as the one who is highly wise, self-realised, erudite and enlightened about the Atma and the principles governing the true meaning of Brahmin and such religious signs as doing fire sacrifices, wearing the sacred thread and the tuft of hair on the head, observing sacraments etc.

To quote this Upanishad—'A true Brahmin is a wise and enlightened person who treats the Atma, the pure consciousness, as the non-dual Principal of creation (i.e. who regards the Atma as a personification of the supreme Brahmin that is non-dual or Advaita and the only supreme Authority of creation), and for whom being steady in his meditation, reflection and contemplation as well as spiritual pursuit is the symbolic tuft of hair—such a person is deemed to be cleansed and made holy by whatever he does. This is because all his deeds are deemed to be auspicious and holy. [That is, he need not do special deeds such as fire sacrifices or observing of sacraments in order to wash off his sins or any kind of spiritual taints that might be adhering to him.]

He is deemed to have completed doing all religious and auspicious deeds required to be done by a man.

It must be understood that such an enlightened man is indeed a Brahmin for he is dedicated and devoted to Brahmin (the Supreme Being), he is no less than a God, he is indeed a 'Rishi' (or a great sage), he is a 'Tapasvi' (or someone who is well endowed with the glorious virtues of Tapa, i.e. austerity and penance, and is steadfast in observing its tenets), he is the best follower of the tenets of the scriptures and an excellent spiritual aspirant, he is therefore the Guru (guide, teacher and preceptor) for the whole world.

A truly wise, enlightened and self-realised aspirant who understands the implications and import of what has been said above realises the truth of the statement that the pure conscious Atma standing for Brahm is the true identity of his. And therefore such an enlightened man declares ‘It (Brahm; Atma; Truth; Consciousness) is me’.

The *Pashupat Brahm Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse no. 19 describes who a true Brahmin is as follows—“A true Brahmin is one who wears the Yagya Sutra (the sacred thread worn during the performance of fire sacrifices, especially the symbolic one as narrated in verse no. 16), who employs the Pranav Mantra (i.e. the OM Mantra) for his religious needs (such as when doing Japa or repetition, Yoga or meditation, Dhyana or reflection and contemplation, etc.), and who is well-versed in the principles of Brahm Yagya (spiritual practices which are equivalent to a formal fire sacrifice but done in a subtle and symbolic manner which lead directly to the realisation of the supreme cosmic Consciousness and the absolute Truth known as Brahm).

The Gods (the term is a metaphor for the virtues of auspiciousness, righteousness, holiness, divinity, nobility etc.) are to be found in the diligent observance of the principles that define a man as a Brahmin. [That is, if a man is a true Brahmin as outlined above, he is deemed to be living God in the sense that he would possess all the eclectic virtues that collectively defined as being ‘godly’.]

The *Par Brahm Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse nos. 8-13 describe who *is* a true Brahmin, and verse no. 14 describes who *is not*. Now, let us examine what these verses say.

First let us see *who is not a true Brahmin*:--“Verse no. 14 = Those Brahmins who are engrossed merely in performing rituals and observing sacraments, or who are engaged in the mundane affairs of the world are Brahmins only for name’s sake (and not true Brahmins), because they live only to fill their stomachs and enjoy the fame, comforts and pleasures that come with worldly respect. Such people go to hell at the end of their lives.

[That is, they continue to take birth and die again, and during each life they undergo sufferings and miseries that are part and parcel of gross mundane existence. They do not find Mukti or spiritual liberation and deliverance, nor do they find peace and bliss that comes with self and Brahm realisation. They do not have true Gyan, and are only pretending to have it to fulfill their worldly desires. In short, they are not true Brahmins, they are imposters, and they do not do justice to the institution of Brahmhood. They give the holy stature of being a Brahmin a bad name.

The question arises, who then is a true Brahmin? The answer is self-evident in the foregoing as well as the following verses. That is, only those who have true knowledge of Brahm, and the depth of wisdom and enlightenment to understand what the term ‘Brahm’ is all about, who do not hanker after external purity and formalities but lay stress on inner cleansing and sincerity of purpose are true Brahmins. Such people would not be much bothered about sporting a tuft on the head or wearing the sacred thread to prove that they are Brahmins, but would instead strive to inculcate the glorious virtues that are so typical of those who have become self and Brahm realised, who have really understood the truth and reality of things.] (14).”

Now, let us see *who is a true Brahmin*:—

“verse no. 8 = A person who has understood the real and true import of the term ‘Sutra’ (literally the sacred thread as well as the formula that unfolds the path of Brahm-realisation) is the one who is eligible to attain Moksha (spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation), is a true Bhikshuk (a monk, a mendicant or

a friar), is truly a Vedagya (one who is an expert in the Vedas and their tenets), is Sadachari (one who follows the path of truth and auspiciousness), and is a Vipra (a Brahmin; a learned and elderly man).

Such a man is not only holy himself but also makes those with whom he comes in contact holy and pure (8).

“verse no. 9 = The supreme transcendental Brahm who is the thread that has knitted together all the units of creation and holds them in place like beads in a rosary or a garland, the ascetic who wears this sacred thread (i.e. who accepts Brahm as the basic essence of creation and honours Brahm exclusively) is indeed said to be an expert ascetic who is well-versed in the philosophy of Yoga (9).

“verse no. 10 = A Brahmin, an expert ascetic who is well-versed in Yoga, and a person who is wise, learned and enlightened should abandon the external sacred thread, because the real thread that bestows spiritual liberation and deliverance is not the external thread made of a gross material (e.g. cotton thread or silk thread) but the symbolic sacred thread representing Brahm that is worn (accepted) internally.

When the sacred thread representing Brahm is symbolically worn internally, there is no fear of it ever getting defiled or polluted; it would permanently be holy and pure (10).

“verse no. 11 = Those who wear the sacred thread after fully understanding its metaphysical importance and spiritual significance, those who have realised that this sacred thread represents Brahm in its entirety are the ones who wear it in the true sense, and therefore are eligible for the benefits that accrue by wearing it. [For the rest, it is merely a formality that can fool the world into believing that the wearer is a holy man, and nothing more. It would not serve them any real purpose except worldly praise.] (11).

“verse no. 12 = Those who wear the Shikha and the Sutra as symbols of Gyan (truthful knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment which kindles spiritual awakening and truth-realisation) regard Gyan as the best thing in this world to acquire and aim for. This is because Gyan is the holiest and the purest thing in this world. [It shows the correct path to the aspirant, and never misleads him for some vested self-interest.] (12).

“verse no. 13 = Those who are wise and enlightened assert that those persons who understand that the Shikha (tuft of hair on the head) is as powerful and potent as the fire element itself are the ones who are true wearers of it. For the rest, they are merely sporting a crop of hair on the head, and nothing more (13).”

These four classes of the human race were created from the single father, the Viraat or Brahma. Their origins are indicative of the different jobs that they were assigned so as to enable the creator perform the task of governance just like a king assigns separate jobs to his different ministers. But it must be clearly understood here that each class of the human race was like a part of the body of the Supreme Being, and even as a man feels disfigured and handicapped as well as feels the pain equally if his leg is cut off from the rest of his body as he feels when his arm or head is severed, the Lord feels betrayed and hurt when even one of his sons is subjected to humiliation and pain. The four classes had specific jobs cut for them so that the society could function smoothly.

The Brahmins have their origin from the mouth of Brahma the creator. Since the mouth is used to give advice and teach others, the primary job of the Brahmins was to act as moral guide to their brethren. The four Vedas, which are repository of all knowledge that exist, were also created from the mouth of Brahma; hence these Brahmins were considered most wise and learned. The arms are metaphors for strength and powers; they are used to protect and help others. Hence, the Kshatriyas, who were created from the arms of Brahma, were those sons of his who would give the needed protection and security to their other brethren. In order to feed his creation, Brahma had to toil and labour to provide for the maintenance and financial and material well being of the society for merely teaching and protecting would not suffice without some one to take care of the other necessities of life. So he created the Vaishyas from his thighs, symbolising labour, to pick up the mantle of mundane affairs of life. But there must be someone who would do the daily chores, such as tilling the fields, doing the harvesting, washing and cleaning, and all other such odd jobs. This was assigned to the Shudras created from Brahma's feet symbolising service.

Reasons for classification—The *Niralambo-panishad* of Shukla Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 10 states the reason for the classification of the society in four classes as follows—“The skin, blood, flesh, bones and the Atma/soul have no caste, creed, colour or race. These have been conceived as a practical measure to regulate and control our day to day behaviours and interactions with each other (10).”

This is an important verse which clearly states that all are equal in the eyes of the scriptures. The different classes or castes or sects or creeds or races which the society has been divided and classified into are man made and artificial. It is just for the sake of convenience of the purpose of delineation of duties and to lay down procedure and guidelines for mutual interactions and determine one's specific place in the hierarchy of existence even as we have a system of hierarchical governance in place in modern society. For example, a Brahmin was supposed to be the teacher and guide for the rest of the society, and the Kshatriya was supposed to give protection to it, while its finances and material needs were looked after by the Vaishya, and it was manually served by the Shudra. This delegation of duties and responsibilities demanded that each person belonging to a particular class should adhere to the laws and regulations meant for that particular class to ensure uninterrupted carrying out of duties and prevention of friction and overlapping of functions causing unnecessary tension and duplicity. This segregation was therefore meant to make life regulated and easy, and not to say that one man was in anyway superior to another in terms of his essential being as a human and a living creature. This is because the Atma or soul, which is pure and conscious, is one in all the creatures, whether he is a man or a woman, a Brahmin or a Shudra. Further, other components of the body, such as the skin, blood etc., are obviously the same in all humans, and if taken in their fundamental and essential form they are the same in all living creatures, whether they are humans or animals. For example, blood when analysed in a chemical laboratory will show the same principal constituents whether it is taken from a Brahmin or from a Kshatriya; blood's constituents would remain the same for all segments of society. Similarly, skin and other parts of the body have no basic difference. The visible and other apparent differences that appear in different forms of life which are fundamentally the same is also supported by the Upanishads when they say that the Atma assumes different forms depending upon its past deeds and their accumulated effects, but the essential form of this Atma remains the same nevertheless. When we talk of 'life' we

mean the entire living kingdom consisting of the plants and the animals, including the humans. This is the holistic view of the Upanishads.

Origin of the four Varnas—The *Param Hans Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 1 says that Brahma the creator had learned about the four Varnas and the laws governing them from his father Lord Adi Narayan, i.e. from Lord Vishnu in his primary form as Lord Viraat Purush from whose navel Brahma was born atop a divine lotus that emerged from it.

The *Subalo-panishad* of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, verse 6, and Canto 2, verse 1 describes the origin of these four classes in society. Let us see what it has to say on the subject.

“Verse no. 6, Canto 1—From this Brahma, the creator, emerged the rest of the creation as follows:--From his mouth came into being the Brahmins; from his arms were created the Kshatriyas; from his thighs evolved the Vaishyas; and from his legs were created the Shudras. From his Mana (mind) came into being the Moon; from his eyes evolved the Sun; from the ears arose the external wind (present in the entire cosmos) as well as the Pran (the vital wind in the form of breath that sustains life, as also the other vital winds that control other functions of the body of a creature); and finally from his heart sprouted the rest of creation [6].

{(1) These four classes of the human race were created from the single father, the Viraat or Brahma. Their origins are indicative of the different jobs that they were assigned so as to enable the creator perform the task of governance efficiently just like a king assigns separate jobs to his different ministers. But it must be clearly understood here that each class of the human race was like a part of the body of the Supreme Being, and even as a man feels disfigured and handicapped and equal intensity of pain if his leg is cut off from the rest of his body as he feels when his arm or head is severed, the Lord feels betrayed and hurt when even one of his sons is subjected to humiliation and pain. All are equal in his eyes. The four classes had specific jobs cut out for them so that the society could function smoothly.

Mouth is used to advice and teach; hence the primary job of the Brahmins was to act as moral guide to their brethren. The four Vedas, which are repository of all knowledge that exists, were also created from the mouth of Brahma; hence these Brahmins were considered most wise and learned because they represented the knowledge and wisdom contained in the Vedas. The arms are metaphors for strength and powers; they are used to protect and help others. Hence, the Kshatriyas were those sons of Brahma who would do the needed by affording protection to their other brethren. In order to feed his creation, Brahma had to toil and labour; merely teaching and protecting would not suffice without some one to take care of the other necessities of life, such as production and distribution of food and generation of wealth to provide basic comforts. So he created the Vaishyas to pick up the mantle of mundane affairs of life on his behalf. But there must be someone who would do the daily chores and the service part, such as tilling the fields, doing the harvesting, washing and cleaning, and all other such odd jobs. This was assigned to the Shudras. None of these classes were meant to be inferior or superior to one another; they were all parts of the body of the same Brahma. In fact, the leg bears the burden of the body; just imagine what would have happened if Brahma had not created anyone from his legs? How would the Brahmin walk, how would the Kshatriya fight, and how would the Vaishya do his commercial activities if he could not walk? Similar arguments can be applied to other classes. See also Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 1/4/11-13, and Aitereyo-panishad, 1/1/4.

(2) The ‘moon’ stands for emotions and sentiments of a creature, hence its origin in the Mana which is the epicenter of all emotive thoughts. The sun shows light to the world, hence its symbolic origin in the eye of the creator. The ears hear sound from all the directions, and sound has its origin in waves which travel in space through the medium of the ether, because sound cannot be either heard or can reach any place without any medium. This medium was called the wind, and since the ears make the presence of sound evident, the wind or air has its origin in the ears of Brahma. These ears are physically shaped like a radar or satellite dish antenna because they not only transmit sound waves but also receive them. They are like a 2-way radio receiver. And of course, the world has any relevance and importance if only the heart loves it and wishes to be enamoured with it. Once the heart starts to loathe it, or becomes dispassionate towards it, the world becomes irrelevant; therefore the world becomes non-existent as far as the creature is concerned.}

“Verse no. 1, Canto 2—From the creator’s Apaana wind (the vital wind which is inhaled and moves down in the body, thereby helping in digestion and excretory functions) was created the ‘Nishad’ community (the boatmen and elephant tamers), the ‘Yakshas’ (a type of demi-God who guards the treasure of the Gods), the ‘Rakshas’ (the ones with evil, pervert, sinful and demonic tendencies), and the ‘Gandharvas’ (celestial musicians; those junior Gods who were lower in the hierarchy of heavenly Gods).

From the bones of the creator were formed the mountains; from his body hairs came into being the members of the botanical kingdom, the various plants and vegetations, including the medicinal herbs; and from his forehead creased with anger evolved the God of wrath, or ‘Rudra’ [1].

{(1)The Nishad community was considered lower than the Shudras. In practical terms this refers to the fact that these people stayed outside the villages and cities, and had little interaction with those people who were regarded as more educated and cultured. The fishermen and others who took care of animals, such as horses, elephants etc. also belonged to this group. The Yaksha was the guard of the God’s treasury; here they were assigned the job of protecting the assets that would be generated by the other classes in social hierarchy. The society had all types of people; some of them were wicked and evil. They were the Rakshas. And the Gandharva was a soul who had aspired to be as exalted as a God but somewhere went astray from his path and became a junior God. All these designations imply that the creation created by the creator had all shades of creatures in it, and all of them were his sons because all were formed from a part of his body. (2) Obviously Brahma got annoyed when his sons started bickering among themselves. So he got angry, and his forehead creased in annoyance. This metamorphosed into Rudra. The word Rudra means anger, wrath, vehemence etc. This Rudra was the God of tempest and destruction. He is also identified with Kaal or time and death, because Rudra sparked annihilation when the opportune time for destruction came. The terrible shaft of Rudra brings death and disease to cattle and man, just like plague/pestilence mentioned in the *Holy Bible*.}

Besides the usual ‘four Varanas’, some texts say that there are ‘five Varanas’, and also ‘six Varanas.’

The 5 *Varnas* are the following—Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra and Nishad who belong to the hunting and boatman tribe.

The 6 *Varnas* are following—Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra, Nishad (who belong to the hunting and boatman tribe) and Chandala who perform last rites of

the dead and stay in the cremation ground and away from inhabited areas of cities and villages.

The *Brihajjabal Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, Brahman 5, verse no. 7 says that even the Chandals and Nishads or out-castes in the society can and should wear the sacred ash called Bhasma on their bodies in order to benefit from its great power of purification and bringing the wearer closer to the supreme Brahman or Shiva. But they should use ash derived from the funeral pyre in cremation grounds instead of from the pit of a religious fire sacrifice done according to Vedic tradition in which the hymns of the Vedas are chanted.

(B) The four Ashrams:

The life of a (Hindu) man was divided into four quarters by ancient sages, forefathers and patriarchs of the society. These four quarters are the following—Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha and Sanyas. Each quarter was of approximately 20-25 years.

The first quarter is when a man was supposed to study and learn the skills that are needed for the affairs of an adult life. This was 'Brahmacharya Ashram'. The word literally means a celibate and one who exercises self-restraint. This was essential for study and inculcating skills which require focus of mind and heart. During this time, the man is young and is supposed to observe austerities while he studies and acquires knowledge to equip him to face the world when he grows up.

The second quarter is 'Grihastha Ashram'. It is when the student enters the household phase of life. He marries, raises a family and carries on with his profession or vocation to increase wealth and progeny.

When a person becomes ripe in age, his working capacity decreases and he must prepare to pass on the baton to the next generation, to his heirs when they are ready to step in his shoes, and when he has done his bit for society. This is the 'Vanaprastha Ashram'—the third phase of life when a person prepares to hand the responsibilities of his worldly affairs to his heirs and mentally prepares himself to lead a calm and detached life so that he can get ready for the final phase of old age.

Though it literally means 'heading for the forest', but not necessarily it be so. Its primary function is to withdraw from playing an active role in the affairs of the world and give one's mind and body rest and peace after the toil of the previous years. In ancient times though it actually meant going to the forest and spending time in a serene place in some hermitage. But in modern times it is neither feasible nor advisable. The best avenue is to withdraw from active role and serve more as an advisor and guide for the next generation in a dispassionate manner.

The final and fourth quarter is called 'Sanyas Ashram' which clearly means absolute withdrawal from the world and its affairs. This is the time when the man is of about say 70 or more years of age. So he needs complete peace and should prepare to make an exit from the world without a fuss. He is expected to create such a situation that no one misses or wails for him nor anything suffers due to his absence. Thus, he dies peacefully and self-contentedly.

During the 'Sanyas Ashram' a person is expected to completely renounce the world and its entanglements, and instead spend the remaining part of his life in spiritual pursuit and searching ways for his spiritual liberation and deliverance.

Now, let us study them in more detail.

(a) Brahmacharya¹—this is the 1st phase of life in which a person studies the scriptures under the tutelage of a wise teacher. This phase of life is marked by

austerities, keeping of vows, observing celibacy, abstinence and continence as well as leading a regimental life style of a boarding school. (b) Grihastha—when a person has studied and prepared himself to face the world, he comes back to his house and enters the 2nd phase called Grihastha Ashram which is a householder's life. He marries, raises a family, produces wealth and helps to carry forward the cycle of creation. This is the most important and enjoyable phase as well as the most tough one because on the one hand there are the comforts and pleasure of the world to be enjoyed, and on the other hand there are the various tribulations and miseries of a family life alongside the dealings with this deceptive world with all its accompanying horrifying problems. (c) Vanprastha—this is the 3rd phase when a man hands over the responsibilities of the world to his heirs and renounces his attachments to the house as well as the world, and heads for the forest, leaving the home for his next generation. It is now that he goes on pilgrimage and prepares for the final stage of his life, and (d) Sanyas—this is the 4th and last stage of life when there is complete cutting-off of all the ties with the world, spending time in contemplation, reflection and meditation, living a life of total renunciation, and begging for food for survival while single mindedly endeavouring for emancipation and salvation. This phase of Sanyas also has many stages depending upon the spiritual elevation and accomplishments of the aspirant, viz. Kutichak, Bahudak, Hansa, Paramhans, Turiyatit and Avadhut.

In brief, the 'Brahmacharis' are celibates students who must exercise the greatest self-restraint in order to concentrate their energy on their studies. It is the first phase of life. The 'Grihastha' is the householder. After study, the student marries to raise a family and contribute to the continuation of the cycle of creation. This marks the second phase of life. The 'Vaan-prastha' is a person who hands over the responsibilities of worldly affairs to his heir and prepares to lead a retired life, literally though the word means to 'retire to the forest'. This is the third phase of life. And finally, the 'Sanyasi' is a person who has renounced the world and spends his time in meditation, reflection and contemplation. This is the fourth and the final phase of life.

The term "Brahmcharaya"—or one who practices the principles of life in accordance to the eclectic philosophy of Brahm-realisation, is very much misunderstood and misquoted. It primarily refers to that part of life when a practitioner exercises exemplary self-control—or "continence"—over his gross organs of the body so that all his energy and attention can be focused on higher goals of life—such as spiritual upliftment and 'self' as well as 'Brahm' realisation. Now, if one allows oneself to indulge in gratifying the urges of the body, a lot of his time and energy would be spent on this activity, leaving him exhausted and weary to the extent that he would have little stamina or will left to pursue higher goals of life.

Worldly indulgences can never give sustainable peace, happiness and bliss; it's like seeking water in a desert mirage. On the other hand, self-restraint that prevents the creature from falling into this trap is 'Brahmacharya'—i.e. practicing the principles of life as practiced by acclaimed ascetics.

Brahmacharya is to live a life that contributes to Brahm-realisation; it is to practice the principles that enable a person to attain success in his pursuit of knowledge of the higher goals of life, to become wise and learned.

Usually the term applies to the first phase of a person's life, the 1st quarter of his life, when he is supposed to spend time studying and imbibing knowledge that would prepare him to face life and the tumble and turmoil of the world. A student who concentrates his mind on his studies will obviously do well and shine in his chosen field as compared to one who spends his time enjoying and fooling around.

Therefore, a person who practices the principles of Brahmacharya thorough out his life becomes empowered with special powers and energy that help him to achieve stupendous feats which his peers who fritter away their internal energy in worldly pursuit and self-indulgence can't hope to achieve.

Brahmacharya is not merely 'celibacy' or control over the sexual urges; it is a comprehensive term encompassing "total self-control" over the tendencies of the gross body consisting of the sense organs of action and perception, as well as the subtle aspects of the body consisting of the mind and heart.

These four Ashrams, their characteristic features and virtues are described in detail in an Upanishad called *Ashramo-panishad* belonging to the Atharva Veda tradition.

Refer also to (i) *Kundiko-panishad* of Sam Veda tradition, verse nos. 1-4, which outline these four Ashrams, and then goes on to describe in detail the life and norms to be followed by a Sanyasi in verse nos. 5-17; (ii) *Kathrudra Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 3 wherein is described the taking of the vows of Sanyas which is a renunciate way of life and the fourth and the last phase in the life of a man. Sanyas prepares him for his final liberation and deliverance from this world.

The Duration of each Ashram—The *Naradparivrajak Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 2 states the number of years one Ashram should ideally consist of. According to it, Brahmacharya Ashram lasts for twelve years, Grihastha Ashram for twenty five years, Vanparashtha Ashram for another twenty five years, and then comes the Sanyas Ashram for the rest of one's life.]

मारग सोइ जा कहूँ जोइ भावा । पंडित सोइ जो गाल बजावा ॥ ३ ॥
मिथ्यारंभ दंभ रत जोई । ता कहूँ संत कहइ सब कोई ॥ ४ ॥

māraga sō'i jā kahum̃ jō'i bhāvā. paṇḍita sō'i jō gāla bajāvā. 3.
mithyārambha dambha rata jō'ī. tā kahum̃ santa kaha'i saba kō'ī. 4.

The right course of action was that which caught the fancy of an individual; everyone acted in his own whimsical way, unmindful of whether his actions and deeds were right or wrong.

A person who brags, one who is a hypocrite, who talks loudly and is boastful, is deemed to be an expert, someone who is wise, erudite, sagacious, knowledgeable and talented (a 'paṇḍita'). (3)

Everyone calls a person a 'saint' who openly and without regrets engages in spurious doctrines and unrighteous undertakings, who practices hypocrisy, pretension, boastfulness, show-offs, deceit and conceit.

[To wit, a pervert, corrupt, pretentious and morally depraved person is regarded as a saint in Kaliyug, while those who are true saints are neglected and treated with scepticism.] (4)

सोइ सयान जो परधन हारी । जो कर दंभ सो बड़ आचारी ॥ ५ ॥
जो कह झूँठ मसखरी जाना । कलिजुग सोइ गुनवंत बखाना ॥ ६ ॥

sō'i sayāna jō paradhana hārī. jō kara dambha sō baṛa ācārī. 5.
jō kaha jhūmṭha masakharī jānā. kalijuga sō'i gunavanta bakhānā. 6.

A person who can usurp the wealth of others by hook or by crook, who can rob or defraud others by using unscrupulous means, is regarded as being clever and intelligent (in Kaliyug).

A person who is pretentious and deceitful, who uses falsehoods to achieve his objectives, is said to be a traditionalist and a practitioner of established norms and principles. (5)

A person who is expert in telling lies and conjuring up imaginary tales and jokes is deemed to be perfect in talents in the age of Kaliyug. (6)

निराचार जो श्रुति पथ त्यागी । कलिजुग सोइ ग्यानी सो बिरागी ॥ ७ ॥
जाके नख अरु जटा बिसाला । सोइ तापस प्रसिद्ध कलिकाला ॥ ८ ॥

nirācāra jō śruti patha tyāgī. kalijuga sō'i gyānī sō birāgī. 7.
jākēm nakha aru jaṭā bisālā. sō'i tāpasa prasid'dha kalikālā. 8.

A person who is evil, pervert and corrupt, who has abandoned the path (of life) as prescribed in the Vedas, is regarded as a talented and wise person, one who has inculcated in himself the auspicious virtues of Vairagya (i.e. a person who practices renunciation, detachment and dispassion). (7)

In Kaliyug, a person who keeps long nails and wears a thick mat of unkempt hairs on his head acquires fame as one who practices severe austerities and does hard penance (Tapa)¹. (8)

[Note—¹It has already been said in Chaupai line no. 4 herein above that pretensions, falsehoods, deceit and show-offs would determine the high social and religious stature of persons in Kaliyug. The more pretentious a person is, the more he can use tricks, deceit and conceit to deceive others, the more boastful he is regarding his religious knowledge and spiritual status, the more acclaim he gets as a holy, saintly and a religious man, notwithstanding what the truth about him actually is.]

दो०. असुभ बेष भूषन धरें भच्छाभच्छ जे खाहिं ।
तेइ जोगी तेइ सिद्ध नर पूज्य ते कलिजुग माहिं ॥ ९८ (क) ॥
dōhā.

asubha bēṣa bhūṣana dharēm bhacchābhaccha jē khāhim.
tē'i jōgī tē'i sid'dha nara pūjya tē kalijuga māhim. 98 (a).

In Kaliyug, a person who wears odd and unsightly clothes and ornaments, who eats everything and anything without bothering to consider whether or not such things are suitable for eating, is called an honourable ascetic (jōgī), one who is perfect, has mystical powers and is adorable in every respect. (Doha no. 98-a)

सो०. जे अपकारी चार तिन्ह कर गौरव मान्य तेइ ।

मन क्रम बचन लबार तेइ बकता कलिकाल महुँ ॥ ९८ (ख) ॥

sōraṭhā.

jē apakārī cāra tinha kara gaurava mām'ya tē'i.

mana krama bacana labāra tē'i bakatā kalikāla mahum̐. 98 (b).

He whose actions and deeds are marked by malfeasance, he whose conduct harm the interest of others or cause discomfort to them—verily, he is the one who acquires great honour and recognition, he is the one who is held in high esteem by all the people (during Kaliyug).

A person who is an inveterate liar, one who has falsehood deeply imbedded in his genes, one whose mind, deeds and words are characterised by lies and sham—such a person is called a great orator and a skilled speaker during the age of Kaliyug. (Sortha no. 98-b)

चौ०. नारि बिबस नर सकल गोसाईं । नाचहिं नट मर्कट की नाई ॥ १ ॥

सूद्र द्विजन्ह उपदेसहिं ग्याना । मेलि जनेऊ लेहिं कुदाना ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

nāri bibasa nara sakala gōsā'īm. nācahiṁ naṭa markṭa kī nā'īm. 1.

sūdra dvijanha upadēsahiṁ gyānā. mēli janē'ū lēhiṁ kudānā. 2.

Oh Lord (“gōsā'īm”—i.e. Garud)! All men are under the dominance of women-folk so much so that they (the men) dance to their (women's) tunes like a monkey dances to the tune of its trainer or the monkey-charmer. [Just like a monkey does what its master wants it to do, men obey the women-folk as if they were enslaved to them.] (1)

The Shudras preach the Brahmins about spiritual wisdom and other fields of knowledge (instead of it being the other way round).

They (Shudras) wear the sacred thread (and act like a Brahmin) to accept whatever donations are made to them, irrespective of the worthiness of such alms or gifts. [The Shudras wear the sacred thread to pretend to be respectable Brahmins who are usually given alms and charity by the people as part of religious duty. So, misled by the sacred thread, the people think that the Shudra is a Brahmin, and give donations to them. The Shudras do not hesitate to cheat the people by pretending to be Brahmins and accept charity from them.] (2)

सब नर काम लोभ रत क्रोधी । देव बिप्र श्रुति संत बिरोधी ॥ ३ ॥

गुन मंदिर सुंदर पति त्यागी । भजहिं नारि पर पुरुष अभागी ॥ ४ ॥

saba nara kāma lōbha rata krōdhī. dēva bipra śruti santa birōdhī. 3.
guna mandira sundara pati tyāgī. bhajahim nāri para puruṣa abhāgī. 4.

All men are indulgent in Kaam (passions, lust and longing), Lobha (greed and rapacity) and Krodha (anger; wrathfulness; fury). They oppose Gods, Brahmins (elders and learned men in the society), Vedas (scriptures) and Saints. (3)

The women (of Kaliyug) are so morally corrupt and unfaithful that they abandon their virtuous husbands who are good to them and possess noble character, and instead they establish a liaison with other unscrupulous men, and get emotionally and physically involved with the latter. (4)

सौभागिनीं बिभूषन हीना । बिधवन्ह के सिंगार नबीना ॥ ५ ॥

गुर सिष बधिर अंध का लेखा । एक न सुनइ एक नहिं देखा ॥ ६ ॥

saubhāginīm bibhūṣana hīnā. bidhavanha kē siṅgāra nabīnā. 5.
gura siṣa badhira andha kā lēkhā. ēka na suna'i ēka nahim dēkhā. 6.

It's such an irony of Kaliyug that those women-folk whose husbands are alive do not wear ornaments (because either they can't afford it or they feel shy to wear them), while those women whose husbands have died wear all sorts of colourful decorations and ornamentations of the latest style (as if they have no regrets for their widowhood)¹. (5)

The relationship between a disciple and a preceptor (or teacher and guide) is like that between a deaf person and a blind person respectively. While the one cannot hear (here meaning the disciple who won't pay attention to his teacher or doesn't understand what is being taught to him), the other cannot see (here referring to the preceptor or teacher who has no in depth knowledge, who is not wise, and who himself does not know the path he is trying to show his disciple). (6)

[Note—¹In Hindu society it is an established tradition that those women whose husbands are alive use ornaments and colourful clothes, while widows are expected to shun all sorts of decorations on their bodies as a token of their sadness and grief at having lost their husbands. During Kaliyug there would be so much moral degradation and lack of good manners and ethics in the society that women would take pride in breaking from tradition and sport colourful clothes and attractive ornaments as if to send a signal that they have no regrets at losing their husbands and are now freely available for the next right suitor.]

हरइ सिष्य धन सोक न हरई । सो गुर घोर नरक महँ परई ॥ ७ ॥

मातु पिता बालकन्ह बोलावहिं । उदर भरै सोइ धर्म सिखावहिं ॥ ८ ॥

hara'i siṣya dhana sōka na hara'i. sō gura ghōra naraka mahum' para'i. 7.
mātu pitā bālakanhi bōlāvahim. udara bhara'i sō'i dharma sikhāvahim. 8.

Be warned: a preceptor and moral guide (gura) who robs his disciple (siṣya) of his wealth but fails to eliminate his ignorance and delusions would certainly fall in the gravest of hells¹. (7)

Parents (mātu pitā) call their children and teach them only those skills and crafts which would help their off-springs fill their stomachs². (8)

[Note—¹The primary job of a Guru is to show the correct path to his disciple. He should be therefore fully qualified for it; he should be sincere and diligent in fulfilling his obligations towards the disciple who relies on him and has faith in him. If the Guru fails to fulfil his obligations, and uses deceit and pretensions to extract money from his disciple, exploiting the latter's faith in him, then surely such a Guru is contemptible and worthy of punishment.

²Like the corrupt Guru, even the parents want their off-springs to learn those skills that would enable them to make a comfortable living in this mundane world, acquire money and fame, unmindful of the merit of pursuing a particular line of occupation that may not stand good or fall foul when judged from the angle of it being in accordance with the principles of Dharma. Though a parent is a child's best friend, teacher and well-wisher, but rarely would a parent teach the child about spiritualism, about the principles of Dharma and the necessity of following it, about the importance of such virtues as having devotion for Lord God, practicing nobility and propriety in conduct and thought, renunciation, detachment and dispassion, austerity and penance, charity and magnanimity, forgiveness, mercy and compassion, and other auspicious virtues and values that would help the child spiritually and aide in building his or her character. A parent would endeavour to teach the child to become 'worldly wise' instead of being 'spiritually wise' and attain some spiritual knowledge that would entitle the child to attain internal peace, contentedness and stability in life. The parent is more concerned about the child's material well-being even if it meant sacrificing moral values and spiritual welfare. Every parent wants the off-spring to 'do well in life', and this translates into acquiring a high position in the society as well as worldly fame and wealth. Rarely would a parent bother about the spiritual wealth and the true well-being of the child.]

दो०. ब्रह्म ग्यान बिनु नारि नर कहहिं न दूसरि बात ।

कौड़ी लागि लोभ बस करहिं बिप्र गुर घात ॥ ९९ (क) ॥

dōhā.

brahma gyāna binu nāri nara kahahim na dūsari bāta.

kaurī lāgi lōbha basa karahim bipra gura ghāta. 99 (a).

The men and the women (of Kaliyug) are markedly hypocrites and so highly pretentious that they talk (boastfully and confidently) of nothing else but the Knowledge of Brahm (i.e. the metaphysical knowledge of the Supreme Being; the sublime and subtle form of knowledge pertaining to the truth of the all-pervading and eternal cosmic Consciousness), pretending to be self-realised, wise and enlightened enough as to have high quality of spiritual wisdom and eclectic knowledge of metaphysical principles (that they want to share with others)—but in practice they

have no compunction or regret to stoop so low, out of irresistible greed for some miniscule pecuniary gains, that they would have no second thoughts while killing a Brahmin and their Guru (i.e. an elderly and learned person who may also happen to be their preceptor and spiritual guide)¹. (Doha no. 99-a)

[Note—¹The people of Kaliyug are excessively evil and morally depraved. They boast of being followers of the laws of Dharma, i.e. they go about telling one and all that they are adherents to the principles regarding a righteous way of life as ordained in the scriptures of which they have an expert knowledge.

Even common people would claim that they are well-versed in the esoteric knowledge of Brahm, a knowledge that even great sages and seers could not claim themselves to be perfect in. But the irony is that such people do not practice what they preach—for if they get an opportunity, they won't hesitate to kill even their Guru or a Brahmin if it gives them some pecuniary material benefit.]

बादहिं सूद्र द्विजन्ह सन हम तुम्ह ते कछु घाटि ।
जानइ ब्रह्म सो बिप्रबर आँखि देखावहिं डाटि ॥ ९९ (ख) ॥

bādahim sūdra dvijanha sana hama tumha tē kachu ghāṭi.
jāna'i brahma sō biprabara ām̐khi dēkhāvahiṁ dāṭi. 99 (b).

The Shudras are boastful and they irreverentially argue with the learned Brahmins, questioning how the latter are superior to them. They would challenge and show disrespect to these senior members of the society and ask them 'Are we in anyway inferior to you?'¹

They (the Shudras) deride the Brahmins and scowl at them mischievously by saying 'A person who knows about Brahm is an exalted Brahmin! [Say, can you claim that you have a perfect knowledge of 'Brahm'? Surely you can't as that would be a boastful statement in itself, something a 'Brahm-Gyani', i.e. one who has the knowledge of Brahm, should not make! A true Brahm-Gyani should be humble and unboastful. So you are trapped in your own game: if you say 'yes' then you are boasting, and if you say 'no' then you are not a Brahmin!]' (Doha no. 99-b)

[Note—¹This statement should not be misinterpreted and turned on its head to mean any insult to the Shudras in the modern secular world where everyone is equal in society. The intent and purpose of the Doha is entirely different. The word 'Shudra' in its broader meaning refers to those people who are lowly, evil, dull-witted and uneducated in the society, while the word 'Brahmin' would refer to those people who are learned, wise, intelligent and act as teachers and guides for the society at large. The elements of casteism or racism should not be unnecessarily invoked and injected into the text to create an unwarranted rift and scepticism if we wish to interpret and correctly understand the meaning of the verses and gain something from it.

Wouldn't it be absurd and incredulous—and unacceptable—if an uneducated, evil, stupid and corrupt person challenges a person who is upright, educated and wise to say that they are both equal and therefore the society should give them equal respect and privileges? Who will accept this argument?

²This is a very clever ploy to demean the stature of an elderly and learned person in the society. “Brahm” is such an esoteric, subtle and sublime entity that no one can claim to have a perfect ‘knowledge of Brahm’. Brahm-realisation is possible, but defining and explaining what Brahm actually is by the means of words with their limited scope is well nigh impossible for even the wisest and the most erudite of scholars.

Though theoretically and literally the nomenclature of the learned and wise segment of people of society as ‘Brahmins’ is based on the assumption that they have knowledge of Brahm, but in practice it means that such people who are called Brahmins are better qualified in terms of knowledge of the scriptures, they have a better understanding of the wider principles of metaphysics, spiritualism and Dharma as compared to the other members to whom they act as advisors and guides. The ‘Shudras’ have no such qualifications or abilities or wisdom.

Though both the Brahmin and the Shudra are ‘human beings’, but the similarity ends there. They can’t be treated alike. For instance, a serial murderer or an inveterate liar or a habitual looter can’t be treated with the same respect with which we would treat a person who is noble, righteous, holy and pious just because both of them are ‘humans’; can we? No insult is meant to the Shudras here; this example is just to illustrate the point.

From a broader perspective this Doha means that in Kaliyug people who have nothing to their credit by way of achievement, knowledge, qualities, intelligence or skills would be so jealous and envious of others who have attained some acclaim and success in the society by their sheer knowledge, skill, intelligence, excellent qualities, hard work or enterprise that the former would try every trick that they can think of to deride and make a mockery of the latter.]

चौ०. पर त्रिय लंपट कपट सयाने । मोह द्रोह ममता लपटाने ॥ १ ॥

तेइ अभेदबादी ग्यानी नर । देखा मैं चरित्र कलिजुग कर ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

para triya lampaṭa kapaṭa sayānē. mōha drōha mamatā lapaṭānē. 1.
tē'i abhēdabādī gyānī nara. dēkhā maiṁ caritra kalijuga kara. 2.

Those who covet and lust for other people’s women-folk, those who are deceitful, pretentious and vile, those who are under the influence of delusions and ensnared by attachments, longings and infatuations, those who have ill-will and malice for others, and envy one and all—such people would be deemed to be wise and talented (in Kaliyug). (1)

Such people would also be deemed to be secular and enlightened enough to have a universal view of existence because they treat everyone alike, claiming to have true metaphysical knowledge which envisages that the same Atma resides in all the living beings, and therefore all living beings are alike.

[Kaagbhusund tells Garud—] Well, this is the practice that I have witnessed in all the Kaliyugs I had taken birth in¹. (2)

[Note—¹Ealier in Uttar Kand, Doha no. 96 along with Chaupai line nos. 8 and 10 that precede it, Kaagbhusund has told Garud that he had taken countless births in the form

of different creatures in different ages. Out of these many births, he said that presently he will be describing his experiences of one such age.

Now he says that a similar situation prevailed in all the ages known as Kaliyug in which he had taken birth. To wit, the characters of Kaliyug are more or less the same in every Kalpa.]

आपु गए अरु तिन्हू घालहिं । जे कहूँ सत मारग प्रतिपालहिं ॥ ३ ॥
कल्प कल्प भरि एक एक नरका । परहिं जे दूषहिं श्रुति करि तरका ॥ २ ॥

āpu ga'ē aru tinahū ghālahim. jē kahum̐ sata māraga pratipālahim. 3.
kalpa kalpa bhari ēka ēka narakā. parahim jē dūṣahim śruti kari tarakā. 4.

Such people (as described herein above) are themselves fallen and doomed, but the irony is that even those who are following the path of virtuousness, auspiciousness, righteousness and truthfulness too are dragged along with such wicked people to come to their own ruin and be doomed¹. (3)

Those who are non-believers, atheists, agnostics, hypocrites or rely on heresy try all tricks and irrational arguments that they can conjure up to deride, demean and mock at the Vedas and their authority and sanctity. Such people suffer immensely by falling into obnoxious hell and lying there for as long as a Kalpa (i.e. for an interminably long period of time). [The idea is not to show disrespect to the scriptures.] (4)

[Note—¹It's like the case of a rotten apple destroying even the good apples in a basket, or a dead fish ruining the whole pond. It also highlights the negative consequences of bad company.]

जे बरनाधम तेलि कुम्हारा । स्वपच किरात कोल कलवारा ॥ ५ ॥
नारि मुई गृह संपति नासी । मूड़ मुड़ाइ होहिं संन्यासी ॥ ६ ॥

jē baranādhama tēli kumhārā. svapaca kirāta kōla kalavārā. 5.
nāri mu'ī gr̥ha sampati nāsī. mūṛa muṛā'i hōhim sann'yāsī. 6.

Even those who are in the lower rung of society and have no trace of spiritual virtues, wisdom or noble qualities in them, such as for instance those who trade in oil, those who are potters, those who are outcastes as they eat flesh of lowly animals such as birds and insects, those who are tribals (uncivilised and uncultured), and those who are distillers of spurious liquor [5]—when the wives of such people of lowly profession and moral values die, or when they fall on bad times and lose their homes or property, they shave-off their own heads and become a Sanyasi (a person who has renounced his attachment with the world and household to become a recluse, a hermit or a monk, claiming that henceforth he would seek self-realisation, walk on the path that would lead him to Brahm-realisation, attain spiritual bliss and peace, and ultimately liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death, or attain emancipation and salvation for their soul)¹ [6]. (5-6)

[Note—¹To wit, such people had never thought even for a moment in their lives about the importance of having scruples and the need for adherence to proper religious conduct. They had been engrossed neck-deep in their family and household affairs. When their wives die, or due to some misfortune they lose their wealth, then all of a sudden they turn to become ascetics and hermits. To the world it appears that they have become spiritual persons, that spiritual awareness has dawned on them, that they have realised the impermanence of life in this mortal world, that they have developed the grand virtues of renunciation, detachment and dispassion, that they want to attain Brahm-hood by becoming a Sanyasi, that they have found spiritual liberation from all worldly attachments to attain the exalted stature of a Sanyasi.

But this is all falsehood and pretension. The true benefit of Sanyas comes when a person develops true inner renunciation and detachment from the world based on his experiences, close observance and understanding of the true nature of the mortal world and the futility of pursuit of the sense objects of the material world because they never give true happiness and peace. This is in sharp contrast to pursuing the cause of realising the 'Atma', the pure consciousness and the true 'self', which can actually bestow abiding bliss, joy and happiness to the seeker.

Therefore, the desire to accept the vows of Sanyas should be a well-thought and well-considered decision, and not based on some sudden emotional spurt arising from some grief or misfortune. It is because this latter sort of Sanyas would not last for long, for as soon as the effect of grief and loss begin to wane, which would be much sooner rather than latter, the person would regret his decision to take to the path of Sanyas and would begin to yearn for his household and its pleasures and comforts. This would lead him no where; he would gain nothing except derision and scorn in the society. If in the beginning he somehow manages to resist the temptation to abandon Sanyas and return to the world, he would be mentally very upset and constantly on edge as his natural desire to go back home to his old way of life would be extremely strong and so overwhelming that it would rob him of all peace any happiness for which he had abandoned his home to become a Sanyasi in the first place.

Such people as cited here had spent their entire lives in an unholy way, and they can't expect sudden spiritual merit or attainment of salvation and emancipation by donning the external appearance of a Sanyasi due to the death of their wives or some misfortune that befell them, for very soon this grief will fade away. Their old habits would take over them, and they would become utterly miserable.

And then what would happen? They will criticise the path of Sanyas and prick holes in it to discourage even sincere spiritual seekers who wish to follow it.

Worse still, these wicked people who had turned to the holy path of Sanyas just to escape the harsh realities of life but soon realised their mistake, become jealous of true and honest Sanyasis, i.e. those pious and religious people who had taken the vows of Sanyas not out of some compulsion or frustration in the world but out of their free will to attain spiritual bliss and solace, to gain self-realisation through focussed spiritual endeavours that are not distracted by any kind of worldly responsibilities and humdrum affairs of life. So the former 'false Sanyasis' begin to mock and deride even the 'genuine Sanyasis' in order to hide their own incompetencies and frustrations. They would tease and mock other honest followers of the path of Sanyas, saying that they are imposters who pretend to have found spiritual peace and solace by adopting this pious path of Sanyas as it is totally misleading and wrong to claim so because this path cannot give spiritual peace, bliss and solace. To justify their irrational arguments they give their own examples and say that they too had thought that Sanyas would

provide them peace and happiness, but it proved to be otherwise and they are now regretting their decision. Hence to claim that Sanyas has opened the door for spiritual bliss and self-realisation is totally unfounded and heresy.

This sort of fabricated argument would leave genuine Sanyasis also in the lurch and they would also begin to harbour doubts about their own choice of adopting this pious path, wondering if they had done the right thing. This would produce a domino effect that would undermine the authority and the sanctity of the august institution of Sanyas which is a path sanctioned by the scriptures as the one that leads a person to his goal of self-realisation, Brahm-realisation, spiritual peace and bliss, as well as liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation.

More details about ‘Sanyas’ are given in a note of the “four Ashrams” appended to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 98 herein above. See also the note appended to the following Chaupai no. 7 herein below.]

ते बिप्रन्ह सन आपु पुजावहिं । उभय लोक निज हाथ नसावहिं ॥ ७ ॥

बिप्र निरच्छर लोलुप कामी । निराचार सठ बृषली स्वामी ॥ ८ ॥

tē bipranha sana āpu pu jāvahim. ubhaya lōka nija hātha nasāvahim. 7.
bipra niracchara lōlupa kāmī. nirācāra saṭha bṛṣalī svāmī. 8.

Though they (i.e. the frustrated people who have donned the appearance of a Sanyasi as detailed in Chaupai line nos. 5-6 herein above) don the external appearance of a Sanyasi (but internally are not at all interested in this pious and holy path of spiritual awareness because they would stoop so low that they have no regrets or shame to) they allow themselves to be worshipped and honoured by Brahmins.

Such wicked people ruin both of their worlds with their own hands—on the one hand they destroy their chances of getting some merit by living a respectable life pursuing their assigned duties and keeping their obligations in the world, and on the other hand they do not get any of the spiritual rewards that accrue to a person who has sincerely renounced his attachment with the gross world and pursues the life of a Sanyasi that is expected to lead him Brahm and self realisation. Hence, they are left neither here nor there; they lose whatever little chance they could have to gain some merit in life.¹ (7)

{So much for the Shudras; but the Brahmins too are fallen and no better than the Shudras. Why? This is answered now—}

The Brahmins are illiterates and lack any worthwhile knowledge; they are greedy and rapacious; they are passionate and lustful; they lack character and virtuousness; they are stupid and dumb-witted; they marry low-caste women of loose character and promiscuous nature². (8)

[Note—¹Once a person takes the vow of Sanyas he is deemed to have declared his intention to renounce the world and its temptations. A Sanyasi should lead a humble and austere life when he desires nothing and expects no honour. It is a life of piety and holiness, a life that should practice exemplary good virtues and be mindful of the fact that the world looks up to him as a spiritual guide who would show others how to live righteously and auspiciously.

If such a person yearns for honour and worship, if he allows himself to be praised and worshipped by others, especially by those who are much senior to them in wisdom, knowledge and virtues, such as the Brahmins, then such a person is in all sooth and without gainsay a blot on the august and holy institution of Sanyas.

It would have been far better for him to have stayed back at home and pick up the thread of life after the initial shock of loss of his wife or wealth faded away. But once he has donned the attire of a Sanyasi he must strictly respect the holiness and sanctity that is associated with this way of life. He must never do anything that would bring the entire concept and system of Sanyas to disrepute and disgrace by his lone black-sheep like deeds.

Personally such imposters suffer complete doom in their life. They face the spectre of absolute alienation and disgrace in the society by their unscrupulous and unethical behaviour. People look at them with utter contempt and scorn; they lose whatever goodwill and sympathy that they had managed to garner for themselves when they had declared their intention to renounce the world and take the path of Sanyas. At the same time as losing face in the physical world they also lose all spiritual benefits that accrues to a person who takes the vows of Sanyas—such as spiritual bliss, peace, solace, liberation and deliverance.

²The Brahmins are not good either. Their behaviour makes them far worse than the Shudras. The world does not expect a Shudra to be virtuous and possess excellent characters, but it does expect so from a Brahmin—because he is to act as the society's preceptor, guide and teacher, one who has knowledge and wisdom, one who is upright and virtuous, one who has an exemplary life to act as an example for the rest of the society. But the way the Brahmins act during Kaliyug as enumerated in this Chaupai, they bring disgrace and scorn to this exalted class of people that the scriptures exhort others to respect and honour. Say, who in his right senses would respect a Brahmin with the characters outlined in this verse? Of course, none would!

The evil affects of Kaliyug are underscored in this verse. It spares neither the most lowly like the Shudras, nor the most exalted like the Brahmins. All are so deluded that they become forced to abandon their paths and duties.]

सूद्र करहिं जप तप ब्रत नाना । बैठि बरासन कहहिं पुराना ॥ ९ ॥

सब नर कल्पित करहिं अचारा । जाइ न बरनि अनीति अपारा ॥ १० ॥

sūdra karahim japa tapa brata nānā. baiṭhi barāsana kahahim purānā. 9.
saba nara kalpita karahim acārā. jā'i na barani anīti apārā. 10.

The Shudras do Japa (silent repetition or muttering of verses from the scriptures) and Tapa (penance, austerity) and observe other religious vows; they sit on the high seat of a preacher and narrate the various Purans (ancient scriptures)¹. (9)

All men do whatever suits them and catches their fancy. Verily indeed, the situation that prevails during Kaliyug is so intensely alarming and pathetic that one cannot even describe its gravity and impact fully and correctly. (10)

[Note—¹Normally, this is the duty of the Brahmins: they are supposed to study the Purans and the Vedas and then teach others about their tenets; they are expected to

explain the meaning of the scriptures to the society. But it is an irony and a paradox of Kaliyug that people don't do their assigned duties but rather engage themselves in things they are not supposed or asked to do. The Brahmins won't honour their moral obligations to the society, and the void is filled by the Shudras who have no understanding of the scriptures.

Imagine, what would a Shudra—who has never had the time nor the inclination to study the scriptures deeply in his entire life, but who quickly read some part of the holy text to gain instant fame as a learned man and reap material benefits out of it—preach others from the pulpit? Naturally, whatever information or knowledge of the scriptures such a man would disseminate to others would be a half-baked, half-truth, corrupted and distorted version of the original scripture which would do more harm than any good to his listeners, and this in turn will have a far-reaching negative impact on the society at large. But who bothers in Kaliyug?

In brief, the idea is that all sorts of unorthodox and controversial things that go against established traditions and norms of behaviour would start happening during Kaliyug. Laws, rules and regulations would be undermined and broken with impunity, without fear of repercussions. Morality and ethics would reach a nadir, and haughtiness and recklessness and all things that go against the principles of Dharma would be touching new heights.

People would take pride in breaking the laws of Dharma and undermining the authority of the scriptures, and would have no compunctions in doing what is not sanctioned in the scriptures. Rather, breaking laws and challenging the scriptures and boldly acting in controversial ways would be regarded as virtues because they imply freedom and liberty; doing what is not supposed to be done would be deemed to be one's birth-right that cannot be challenged.]

दो०. भए बरन संकर कलि भिन्नसेतु सब लोग ।

करहिं पाप पावहिं दुख भय रुज सोक बियोग ॥ १०० (क) ॥

dōhā.

bha'ē barana saṅkara kali bhinnasētu saba lōga.

karahiṁ pāpa pāvahiṁ dukha bhaya ruja sōka biyōga. 100 (a).

During the age of Kali (i.e. Kaliyug), there would be so much promiscuity and prevalence of intermarriages that the generations of people so produced would lose their identity and purity of lineage.

The people engage themselves in doing sinful acts and pervert deeds, which produce negative consequences for them. So they suffer interminably from various kinds of sorrows, grief, fears and diseases, as well as the agony of separation from their loved ones and things they hold close to their hearts. (Doha no. 100-a)

श्रुति संमत हरि भक्ति पथ संजुत बिरति बिबेक ।

तेहिं न चलहिं नर मोह बस कल्पहिं पंथ अनेक ॥ १०० (ख) ॥

śruti sammata hari bhakti patha saṅjuta birati bibēka.

tēhiṁ na calahiṁ nara mōha basa kalpahīṁ pantha anēka. 100 (b).

People are so deluded and misled by false doctrines that they do not follow the path of Bhakti for Lord Hari (devotion for Lord God) along with practicing the eclectic path of renunciation and acquisition of spiritual wisdom as espoused by the Vedas.

Instead of following this wise path, the people follow all sorts of imaginary doctrines and create their own sects and philosophies. (Doha no. 100-b)

छं०. बहु दाम सँवारहिं धाम जती । बिषया हरि लीन्हि न रहि बिरती ॥ १ ॥
तपसी धनवंत दरिद्र गृही । कलि कौतुक तात न जात कही ॥ २ ॥

chanda.

bahu dāma samvārahim dhāma jatī. biṣayā hari līnhi na rahi biratī. 1.
tapasī dhanavanta daridra grhī. kali kautuka tāta na jāta kahī. 2.

{In the following Chandas, the strangest of developments and the extreme levels of paradoxes, ironies, oddities and utterly freakishness of behaviour that occur during the period of Kaliyug, that would leave any right thinking person totally flummoxed and confounded, are being enumerated.}

The so-called reclusive persons who have deemed to renounce the world and its material comforts and charms build expensive houses for themselves and furnish these buildings with the choicest of things of pleasure and comfort.

Such imposters as they (who pretend to be reclusive persons and declare that they wish to lead a life like a monk or a hermit but build grandest of homes for themselves) do not have even a whit of the virtue of renunciation, detachment and dispassion in them. The fact is that these virtues have been robbed (i.e. overcome and replaced) by the evil and negative trait of longing for the pleasure and comfort of the sense objects of the material world as well as desire for gratification of their sense organs. (Chanda line no. 1)

Those who are supposed to do Tapa and lead a life like an ascetic (i.e. a life of penance, austerity and renunciation) have become rich, while householders are penniless, suffering from poverty and lack of even basic resources to lead a respectable life of dignity and honour.

Oh my dear (tāta), it is difficult to fully narrate and enumerate the countless inconsistencies, oddities, paradoxes, ironies, strange peculiarities and freak happenings of Kaliyug.

[To wit, oh Garud, I am just giving you an idea of the way morality and principles of a righteousness, the good way of life and the virtuousness of character expected from an individual as described by the scriptures would gradually erode and slide downhill during Kaliyug, giving way to perversion, depravity, corruption and evil tendencies. These dark and obnoxious qualities would gradually cast their shadow and extend their vicious grip over all the inhabitants of this world till a point would be reached when all goodness would be totally eclipsed and Dharma would be buried underground.] (Chanda line no. 2)

कुलवंति निकारहिं नारि सती । गृह आनहिं चेरि निबेरि गती ॥ ३ ॥

सुत मानहिं मातु पिता तब लौं । अबलानन दीख नहीं जब लौं ॥ ४ ॥

kulavanti nikārahim nāri satī. gr̥ha ānahim cēri nibēri gatī. 3.

suta mānahim mātu pitā taba laum̐. abalānana dīkha nahim̐ jaba laum̐. 4.

People force a chaste and loyal woman of good character out of their homes, and replace her by bringing in women of loose character. To wit, people would find excuse to divorce their loyal wives, and throwing all caution to the wind they would bring in servant girls (as sex slaves, to satisfy their lust). (Chanda line no. 3)

A son would obey his parents (mātu pitā) only till the time he has not seen a maiden.

[To wit, once a boy falls in love with a girl, or gets married, his whole life revolves around the lady of his choice. Whereas earlier he would have listened to his parents and discuss things with them, but once he has a woman by his side he becomes so intoxicated by infatuation that his whole attention is pivoted on her, and he would rather lend his ears to her than his mother or father who suddenly become nagging outsiders for him. The parents who were a son's best friend and companion from his birth all of a sudden become intruders in his private life, and even their voice annoys him. When he needs any advice, he would consult his wife or girl-friend instead of his parents.] (4)

ससुरारि पिआरि लगी जब तें । रिपुरूप कुटुंब भए तब तें ॥ ५ ॥

नृप पाप परायन धर्म नहीं । करि दंड बिडंब प्रजा नितहीं ॥ ६ ॥

sasurāri pi'āri lagī jaba tēm̐. ripurūpa kuṭumba bha'e taba tēm̐. 5.

nṛpa pāpa parāyana dharma nahim̐. kari daṇḍa biḍamba prajā nitahim̐. 6.

As for the woman, once she is married and enters her husband's home and gradually develops affectionate relationship with her in-laws, she begins to treat her own kith and kin back home in her parent's place as her virtual enemies (i.e. she soon forgets them; she does not either wish to meet them or have any contact with them).

[Once married, the girl soon forgets the immense sufferings and sacrifices her parents had made for her ever since she was born, for her upbringing and well-being. Like a chameleon she changes colours and begins to treat a family of her in-laws, who till other day was a complete stranger for her, as her own kith and kin. Once she sets foot in her in-law's home a woman forgets her obligation towards her parents and kith and kin who had helped bring her up against the greatest of odds and problems that they might have had to face. She is so selfish that once her needs are taken care of by her husband and his family, she easily forgets about her own parents and her original family, and begins to treat them as if they were all strangers or aliens.]¹ (Chanda line no. 5)

The Kings and rulers of the realm are indulgent in sinful activities; they have no trace of righteousness and noble qualities which they are expected to possess.

They are harsh, inconsiderate, whimsical and reckless; they make their subjects and dependants suffer interminably due to their whims and fancies by inflicting regular punishment on them, even without any rhyme or reason. The

dilemma is that the people within their realm cannot afford to resist them, and so they have to reluctantly submit themselves to the King's or ruler's whims. (Chanda line no. 6)

[Note—¹The idea is that in Kaliyug the moral situation would be so low that both the son and the daughter would forget their obligations to their respective parents. The factor of “Kaam”, passion and lust for the opposite sex, would be so overwhelming that once they get married, both the son and the daughter would all but forget about their parents who had taken so much trouble to bring them up. If a man and a woman can be so ungrateful and unfaithful to his or her parent, one can imagine what sort of loyalty would they have for the so many strangers with whom they come in contact and forge some kind of relationship during the course of their lives, personal or professional, in this selfish world?]

धनवंत कुलीन मलीन अपी । द्विज चिन्ह जनेउ उघार तपी ॥ ७ ॥
नहिं मान पुरान न बेदहि जो । हरि सेवक संत सही कलि सो ॥ ८ ॥

dhanavanta kulīna malīna apī. dvija cinha janē'u ughāra tapī. 7.
nahim māna purāna na bēdahi jō. hari sēvaka santa sahī kali sō. 8.

Rich people who have wealth and resources are treated as being of high birth and given great respect and honour even though they may be fallen, lowly, of a vile character, most corrupt and evil by their inherent nature.

A Brahmin's identity is limited to wearing the sacred thread, and that of an ascetic of remaining naked.¹ (Chanda line no. 7)

In Kaliyug, those who don't believe in the Vedas and the Purans (i.e. those who don't respect and have faith in the scriptures and their sanctity, those who are agnostics, atheists and non-believers)—such people are called devotees of Lord Hari (the Lord God) and true saints². (Chanda line no. 8)

[Note—¹To wit, the people of Kaliyug would be so foolish that they would recognise and respect a person by his external appearances, not bothering to find out whether that person actually deserves such an honour. For instance, a man who is rich gets honour and respect in the world although he may be most corrupt and evil by nature, and has acquired his wealth by the most crooked means one can imagine.

Similarly, a man is respected in Kaliyug and shown honour befitting a holy person such as a Brahmin or an ascetic just because he wears a sacred thread or remains naked respectively, irrespective of the fact that he may be a crook and has no other quality or character worth the name which a Brahmin or an ascetic is expected to possess that would actually entitle him to get any respect and honour.

Since easy honour and pecuniary benefits can be got by pretentious means, no one in Kaliyug bothers about scruples and spiritual values, about inculcating noble virtues and an ideal character. The world would be taken over by such pretentious people who would cheat the society as well as themselves, throwing all precautions and morality to the wind.

Refer also to Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 98 herein above where a similar idea is expressed.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 98 herein above.]

कबि बृंद उदार दुनी न सुनी । गुन दूषक ब्रात न कोपि गुनी ॥ ९ ॥
कलि बारहिं बार दुकाल परै । बिनु अन्न दुखी सब लोग मरै ॥ १० ॥

kabi bṛnda udāra dunī na sunī. guna dūṣaka brāta na kōpi gunī. 9.
kali bārahīn bāra dukāla parai. binu anna dukhī saba lōga marai. 10.

During Kaliyug, there is a proliferation of poets and bards (or talented, literate and learned people) who have grown manifold, but there is a dearth of those who would recognise and reward them (or those who would support talented people financially and by other means).

There is no shortage of those who find fault or prick holes even in good virtues and noble characters, but rare are those who possess any of such virtues and characters themselves. [People would make it their duty to criticise others and find faults in them, but no one would bother to practice even a fraction of goodness they might see in others.] (Chanda line no. 9)

During Kaliyug, there are repeated cycles of famine and drought and other such natural calamities. People come to immense hardships and die due to lack of food and nourishment¹. (Chanda line no. 10)

[Note—¹Doha no. 101 below explains why this happens.]

दो०. सुनु खगेस कलि कपट हठ दंभ द्वेष पाषंड ।
मान मोह मारादि मद व्यापि रहे ब्रह्मंड ॥ १०१ (क) ॥
dōhā.

sunu khagēsa kali kapaṭa haṭha dambha dvēṣa pāṣaṇḍa.
māna mōha mārādi mada byāpi rahē brahmaṇḍa. 101 (a).

Listen, oh King of Birds (sunu khagēsa)! During the age of Kaliyug, hordes of negative qualities and perversities of all conceivable kind—such as falsehood, deceit, conceit, pretensions, stubbornness, enmity, jealousy, heresy, egotism, haughtiness, arrogance, hypocrisy, attachments, infatuations, longings, passions, lust, and other such degrading and demeaning qualities—would rule the roost, becoming all-pervading and universal in the world. (Doha no. 101-a)

तामस धर्म करहिं नर जप तप ब्रत मख दान ।
देव न बरषहिं धरनीं बए न जामहिं धान ॥ १०१ (ख) ॥

tāmasa dharma karahiṃ nara japa tapa brata makha dāna.
dēva na baraṣahiṃ dharaniṃ ba'ē na jāmahim dhāna. 101 (b).

People would practice the path of Dharma (the way of life as ordained in the scriptures) with ill intent, thereby turning this path into an unholy ritual to attain their worldly objectives. Thus, practicing Japa (repetition of holy Mantras), Tapa (penance and austerity), Vrat (religious vows), Yagya (fire sacrifices) and Daan (making charity) would be done for vested self interests¹.

The Gods (i.e. the forces of Nature) do not shower adequate rains, and the result is that even seeds that have already been sown in the ground do not sprout and produce grains². (Doha no. 101-b)

[Note—¹These are spiritual practices designed to lead a person forward on the path of attaining purity, piety and self-realisation that would ultimately help him to gain liberation and deliverance for himself. But in Kaliyug, people would do them to fulfil their worldly objectives, attain name and fame and wealth. This would be like exploiting the goodness inherent in these spiritual activities for selfish ends, and utilising these spiritual tools to fulfil evil desires. This would corrupt these practices and rob them of their potentials. The net effect would be that instead of doing any good, they would cause harm to their practitioners. It is like the case of 'fire'. Fire is absolutely necessary in the world; it keeps the world warm and cooks food for it. But the same fire would burn the world to ash if played fools with.

²The negative consequences and the curse of Nature for fiddling with the sanctity of these holy practices is that they backfire, and this manifests itself in the form of onslaught of famines and droughts that make people die in hordes.

Refer: Chanda line no. 10 that precedes this Doha no. 101 herein above.]

छं०. अबला कच भूषन भूरि छुधा । धनहीन दुखी ममता बहुधा ॥ १ ॥
सुख चाहिं मूढ़ न धर्म रता । मति थोरि कठोरि न कोमलता ॥ २ ॥
chanda.

abalā kaca bhūṣana bhūri chudhā. dhanahīna dukhī mamatā bahudhā. 1.
sukha cāhahim mūṛha na dharma ratā. mati thōri kaṭhōri na kōmalatā. 2.

Women (of Kaliyug) have no ornaments except their tresses, and they have an enormous appetite (i.e. their passions and desires have no end).

They are always unhappy and suffering from grief and sorrows due to lack of sufficient wealth and endless desires and infatuations¹. (Chanda line no. 1)

These stupid women want happiness, joy and bliss, but unfortunately they have no faith in the principles of Dharma (righteous way of living).

They have little wisdom and wit, but their mind is stubborn and it knows no tenderness (as well as the virtues of patience and resilience). (Chanda line no. 2)

[Note—¹Householders are generally poor in Kaliyug; they lack wealth but their wants and longings have no end. So the women-folk do not find sufficient financial means to satisfy their desires for worldly objects and pleasures. This makes them unhappy

and eternally restless. What is the spin-off of this situation? Well, they would slyly adopt other unscrupulous means to fulfil their desires, and this in turn will mean that they become corrupt and of lose character.]

नर पीडित रोग न भोग कहीं । अभिमान बिरोध अकारनहीं ॥ ३ ॥

लघु जीवन संबतु पंच दसा । कलपांत न नास गुमानु असा ॥ ४ ॥

nara pīḍita rōga na bhōga kahīm. abhimāna birōdha akāranahīm. 3.
laghu jīvana sambatu pañca dasā. kalapānta na nāsa gumānu asā. 4.

[Not only the women, but—] Even the men are suffering (in Kaliyug). They have many diseases, and there is no happiness and joy anywhere.

They are proud, egoist, haughty and arrogant. They harbour enmity with others; they hate and oppose each other for no rhyme or reason. (Chanda line no. 3)

Life is very short and may not extend beyond say ten or five years (because many people die of various diseases and due to so many calamities that are natural or man-made). Yet the people are so proud and boastful of themselves and their achievements as though they would live for a hundred years and beyond to enjoy life and its pleasures for eternity¹. (Chanda line no. 4)

[Note—¹The main idea is that since people would go against the laws of Nature and become sinful and evil, they will have to face consequences of their misdeeds and will suffer interminably. They would be so haughty and arrogant that they would become blind to seeing the truth and deaf to hearing any good advice that is given to them.

The deluding effect of Kaliyug is so marked that inspite of the fact that people see others dying around them every day due to a variety of causes, they think that no harm would come their way and they will live for a hundred or so years to enjoy the world and its pleasures. Inspite of being aware of diseases and sickness spreading their tentacles all around them, they think that they would always remain healthy and be able to enjoy the pleasures and comforts of the sense objects of the material world that they yearn for. They think that they will never die.]

कलिकाल बिहाल किए मनुजा । नहिं मानत क्वौ अनुजा तनुजा ॥ ५ ॥

नहिं तोष बिचार न सीतलता । सब जाति कुजाति भए मगता ॥ ६ ॥

kalikāla bihāla ki'ē manujā. nahīm mānata kvau anujā tanujā. 5.
nahīm tōṣa bicāra na sītalatā. saba jāti kujāti bha'ē magatā. 6.

Kaliyug has made people absolutely restless so much so that they have lost their mental bearing and power of reasoning, and behave like mad men. No one respects the sanctity of the relationship of one's daughter or sister. [Morality and ethics have reached such a low nadir that men become slaves of passion, and they forget to maintain the dignity, the decorum and the sanctity of relationship that exists between a father and a daughter, or between a brother and a sister.] (Chanda line no. 5)

People have no contentedness, no patience, no wisdom or wit, and no courtesy and good manners.

[To wit, ill-behaviour and ill-manners are the norm during the evil era of Kaliyug, and so is constant agitation and restlessness due to lack of contentedness that forms the foundation for internal peace and mental stability.]

Everyone, irrespective of their birth and lineage, becomes a beggar. No one hesitates to ask for things not really needed or useful in life.

[To wit, no one bothers about self-respect and honour by remaining contented with whatever one has, and instead they willingly and cheerfully sacrifice their dignity by spreading out their hands before others to take whatever comes for free. No one thinks twice before coming under the burden of obligations by accepting things from others. Even a king would accept gifts like a petty person.] (Chanda line no. 6)

इरिषा परुषाच्छर लोलुपता । भरि पूरि रही समता बिगता ॥ ७ ॥

सब लोग बियोग बिसोक हए । बरनाश्रम धर्म अचार गए ॥ ८ ॥

iriṣā paruṣācchara lōlupatā. bhari pūri rahī samatā bigatā. 7.
saba lōga biyōga bisōka ha'ē. baranāśrama dharma acāra ga'ē. 8.

Jealousy, malice and ill-will, harsh words and biting rebukes, greed and rapacity—all are rampant.

The virtues of having equanimity and composure, of remaining steady and calm in the face of adversities and provocations, have become things of the past and almost forgotten virtues. (Chanda line no. 7)

All the people are overwhelmed by the grief and aggravated sorrows caused by separation from their dear ones (such as bereavement or forceful separation due to circumstances) and things they long for (such as someone snatching their wealth by force, or they being forced to part with their wealth against their wishes).

The principles of conduct and obligation of doing one's assigned duties in accordance with the laws of Dharma that govern the working of the society one belongs to and the phase of one's life (baranāśrama dharma) have all been neglected¹. (Chanda line no. 8)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 98.]

दम दान दया नहिं जानपनी । जड़ता परबंचनताति घनी ॥ ९ ॥

तनु पोषक नारि नरा सगरे । परनिंदक जे जग मो बगरे ॥ १० ॥

dama dāna dayā nahim jānapanī. jaṛatā parabanācanatāti ghanī. 9.
tanu pōṣaka nāri narā sagarē. paranindaka jē jaga mō bagarē. 10.

No one seems to have restraint over his sense organs; no one seems to give charity selflessly; no one seems to have mercy and compassion; no one seems to be rational and wise.

Stupidity and fraud have become widespread and dominant features. (Chanda line no. 9)

Both the men and the women remain engaged in filling their stomach and earning a livelihood; all people are engrossed in pampering their bodies. [No one at all bothers about the welfare of his or her soul.]

Those who criticise and prick holes in others, those whose pastime is salacious slander and gossip—such people have spread everywhere. (Chanda line no. 10)

दो०. सुनु ब्यालारि काल कलि मल अवगुन आगार।

गुनउँ बहुत कलिजुग कर बिनु प्रयास निस्तार ॥ १०२ (क) ॥

dōhā.

sunu byālāri kāla kali mala avaguna āgāra.

guna'um̐ bahuta kalijuga kara binu prayāsa nistāra. 102 (a).

[Kaagbhusund said—] Listen, oh the Enemy of Serpents (“byālāri”; Garud)! The age of Kali is virtually an abode of darkness symbolising sins, turpitude, evil and vices.

But inspite of all its shortcomings and drawbacks, all its degeneration, perversities and depravities, Kaliyug has one exceptional worthwhile quality (or kind of a ‘ray of hope at the end of the dark tunnel’)—and it is that during this age a creature is able to get freedom easily from the web of birth and death that is so characteristic of life in this mundane and mortal world. [How this is made possible is explained below in the verses that follow herein below.] (Doha no. 102-a)

कृतजुग त्रेताँ द्वापर पूजा मख अरु जोग।

जो गति होइ सो कलि हरि नाम ते पावहिं लोग ॥ १०२ (ख) ॥

kṛtajuga trētāṁ̐ dvāpara pūjā makha aru jōga.

jō gati hō'i sō kali hari nāma tē pāvahin̐ lōga. 102 (b).

The spiritual objectives of a creature, and the attainment of liberation and deliverance of his soul from the cycle of birth and death with its accompanying chain of endless horrors and miseries, that could be achieved by making a lot of strenuous efforts such as doing worship (of gods and elements of Nature visualised as deities that symbolised divine forces), various sacrifices and meditation etc. (pūjā makha aru jōga) during the (three) ages that preceded Kaliyug, viz. the Sata Yug, the Treta Yug, and the Dwapar Yug respectively—the same spiritual rewards and the same pristine pure and holy destination for the soul is attainable by the creature simply by relying on the holy name of the Lord God (here referring to the holy and divine name of Lord Ram, the revealed form of the Supreme Being)¹. (Doha no. 102-b)

[Note—¹To wit, an easy method and an easy-to-implement way has been made available to all the creatures in Kaliyug that would help even the most humble and the illiterate of persons to find spiritual peace and bliss as well as freedom from the cycle of transmigration with virtually no effort invested—and it is to rely on the mystical

powers of the holy, the divine and the sacred name of the Lord God to take him across this vast and endless ocean-like world of birth and death.

If one has firm faith in the Lord and his holy name, if one has a firmness of conviction and rock-solid belief in the spiritual powers of the Lord's holy name that it can surely provide emancipation and salvation to the soul, then one can always rely on this name for all his spiritual needs. It is so easy to do it because a spiritual aspirant can remember this name even while going about the affairs of his routine life—and by practice make it his habit to repeat the name every moment of his life. No special qualifications are needed; no special vows are to be kept; no special efforts are to be made; no special time is to be allotted; no money is needed; no external activities of the body are affected; and no worldly job or work or duty suffers by merely remembering the Lord's holy name internally as a matter of habit.

But by inculcating this simple and harmless habit of remembering the Lord's holy name in Kaliyug, a creature achieves such astounding success in attaining his spiritual goal of finding liberation and deliverance for himself that all the other negativities associated with this age are put aside and forgotten when compared to this priceless boon so unique to Kaliyug, a character that no other age or era has.]

चौ०. कृतजुग सब जोगी बिग्यानी । करि हरि ध्यान तरहिं भव प्रानी ॥ १ ॥

त्रेताँ बिबिध जग्य नर करहीं । प्रभुहि समर्पि कर्म भव तरहीं ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

kr̥tajuga saba jōgī bigyānī. kari hari dhyāna tarahim bhava prānī. 1.

trētām̐ bibidha jagya nara karahim. prabhuhi samarpi karma bhava tarahim.

2.

{Now, Kaagbhusund briefly enumerates the unique qualities and characters of the people during the four ages known as Sata Yug, Treta Yug, Dwapar Yug and Kaliyug.}

In the age known as 'Sata Yug' (which is the first of the four-yug cycle that constitutes one round of creation and destruction), more or less everyone was like an ascetic; they were wise, self-realised, enlightened and had spiritual wisdom.

During this period, a Jiva (a creature; a living being) could cross the vast and fathomless ocean-like world of transmigration (the endless cycle of birth and death) by meditating upon Lord Hari (the Supreme Being's cosmic all-pervading form)¹. (1)

In the next era known as 'Treta Yug', men used to do various kinds of fire sacrifices and meritorious deeds. They attained liberation and deliverance (from the cycle of transmigration) by doing all such sacrifices and meritorious deeds selflessly and then offering whatever rewards that accrued due to such activities to the Lord God.

[Since people did not wish to accept and enjoy any reward for their sacrifices they did, and offered all rewards of spiritual practices to the Lord God, their 'Parent', so when they died their soul did not have to re-enter the cycle of birth and death to enjoy the rewards that had been accumulated and become due to them by the virtue of their doing fire and other sacrifices during their previous life. Thus, at the time of death of the physical body, their soul got emancipation and salvation.]² (2)

[Note—¹During Sata Yug, the element of ‘Sata’ or Truth was ubiquitous. The general populace was so extremely wise, self-realised and enlightened that they could understand that there is no ‘truth’ in the grossness of the surrounding world and life in it. Who would want ‘false’ things; who would pursue ‘false’ happiness? So such people focussed on finding the aspect of life which was the ‘real Truth’. Hence they meditated and contemplated in search of this Truth. They meditated because the ‘truth’ they wished to find could not be searched and found in the external world which was soaked in falsehood.

Failing to find true happiness, true peace and true bliss in the external gross world by all means they could employ and think of, they finally decided to use the tool of doing meditation, reflection and contemplation. This quest for the ‘truth’ using these tools led them inwards to their ‘Atma’ which they found was ‘pure consciousness’. Once this discovery was made, they erupted in joy even as they experienced a sudden spurt of contentedness, bliss and ecstasy springing up from their inner self, from their own heart.

When such enlightened souls delved into the matter more deeply and analysed available data like a modern scientist does, they discovered to their amazement and joy that the Atma which they had realised as dwelling inside them is the same Atma that pervades the entire creation; that it is a cosmic entity rather than an entity limited to their individual self. They realised that their own Atma is also called the ‘Parmatma’, the Supreme Atma that is also known as “Lord Hari” at the cosmic level of creation. To wit, they realised that what their own Atma is as the microcosmic level of creation, the Parmatma known as Hari is at the macrocosmic level.

The natural corollary to this was that they realised the truth that there is really no difference between their own ‘true self’ represented by the Atma, and Lord Hari who represents the cosmic form of the Supreme Atma. They were the one and the same entity, albeit existing at different levels of creation.

Thus, meditation, reflection and contemplation led the people of Sata Yug attain Lord Hari. The positive effect of this was that they found freedom from the web of falsehoods associated with the notion that the gross physical body of a creature is his true identity, and the world in which this body lives is a reality. This realisation in turn provided them with spiritual liberation and deliverance, and attainment of the ‘Truth’—i.e. realisation of the spiritual goal of oneness of the individual’s Atma with the cosmic Atma known as Lord Hari or the Parmatma.

²The general rule-of-thumb in the metaphysical realm is that a creature’s soul or Atma—which in reality is ‘pure consciousness’ and the living being’s ‘true identity and self’ as opposed to his gross body which is simply an external cloak that the subtle-and-sublime Atma has to don in order to live in a world that is also gross like the body—has to return and take a new birth after his body dies at the end of its tenure if the dying creature has any desire unfulfilled at the time of the body’s demise.

During Treta Yug, the people were highly wise and enlightened, so they understood this eclectic and esoteric spiritual Truth. They did not harbour any desires when they died, and so their souls did not have to re-enter the cycle of birth and death.

Meanwhile, the fire sacrifices that they did during their lifetime helped them burn all residual sins and vices that could have acted as a burden or fetter on their soul and drag it back or keep it bound to the cycle of birth and death. Hence, freedom was a obvious outcome, it was a natural corollary.]

द्वपर करि रघुपति पद पूजा । नर भव तरहिं उपाय न दूजा ॥ ३ ॥
कलिजुग केवल हरि गुन गाहा । गावत नर पावहिं भव थाहा ॥ ४ ॥

dvāpara kari raghupati pada pūjā. nara bhava tarahim upāya na dūjā. 3.
kalijuga kēvala hari guna gāhā. gāvata nara pāvahim bhava thāhā. 4.

During the age of Dwapar (the third era), men could cross over the vast ocean-like world of birth and death by offering worship, reverence and homage to the holy feet of Lord Raghupati (Lord Ram). There was no other alternative way or option¹. (3)

Finally, during Kaliyug, it is simply by singing and narrating the divine glories of Lord Hari (Lord Ram) that men can find the end of (i.e. cross) the huge and seemingly endless ocean symbolising the cycle of birth and death². (4)

[Note—¹As time passed, the excellent virtue known as the ‘Sata Guna’, which stood for the brilliance of Truth, was gradually overshadowed and eclipsed by the rise of negative qualities known as ‘Tama Guna’ which symbolised the darkness of delusions and its accompanying spiritual taints. This transition was a very gradual process—much like the way the full moon’s brilliant disc slowly reduces in brightness during the fortnight of its waning phase, and finally vanishes in the void of darkness.

If the ‘full moon’ is likened to the Sata Yug, the Treta Yug would represent the moon with a quarter of its bright disc hidden from view, the Dwapar Yug to the half moon, and the Kaliyug to the last quarter of the moon when it looks so dark and gloomy that inspite of being present in the sky it does not lend any light to its surroundings, till the time the moon completely vanishes from sight symbolising the end of ‘one cycle of four Yugs’ when there is all round destruction of the Sata element that had kept the world illuminated with the light of ‘Truth’.

Hence, in Dwapar Yug people were less wise and enlightened as compared to the two previous Yugs. Doing meditation and fire sacrifices were beyond their abilities and capacities. What next best thing they could do to achieve the same spiritual objective was to worship the Lord God and pay respect to the Lord’s holy feet. For doing this they did not need skills and concentration of the mind needed to do meditation, reflection and contemplation, and neither did they need much of a knowledge of the scriptures or do elaborate exercises or possess wealth and resources as would be required for doing fire sacrifices.

²To wit, during Kaliyug one can easily find liberation and deliverance from the cycle of transmigration by simply singing hymns praising the glories of Lord Hari—or Lord Ram. No knowledge of the Vedas or Purans is necessary; no need to engage in strenuous and elaborate exercises.

The easy method for attaining spiritual bliss and peace during Kaliyug is to sing the hymns of Lord Ram.]

कलिजुग जोग न जग्य न ग्याना । एक अधार राम गुन गाना ॥ ५ ॥
सब भरोस तजि जो भज रामहि । प्रेम समेत गाव गुन ग्रामहि ॥ ६ ॥
सोइ भव तर कछु संसय नाही । नाम प्रताप प्रगट कलि माहीं ॥ ७ ॥
कलि कर एक पुनीत प्रतापा । मानस पुन्य होहिं नहिं पापा ॥ ८ ॥

kalijuga jōga na jagya na gyānā. ēka adhāra rāma guna gānā. 5.
 saba bharōsa taji jō bhaja rāmahi. prēma samēta gāva guna grāmahi. 6.
 sō'i bhava tara kachu sansaya nāhīm. nāma pratāpa pragaṭa kali māhīm. 7.
 kali kara ēka punīta pratāpā. mānasa pun'ya hōhīm nahīm pāpā. 8.

Indeed, in all sooth and without gainsay, in Kaliyug there is no (need for doing) Yoga (meditation), Yagya (fire and other sacrifices), and Gyan (having spiritual knowledge, being self-reaslied, acquiring wisdom and enlightenment).

The only source of spiritual succour and solace, the only basis by which one can derive joy and happiness is to sing hymns in praise of Lord Ram and his divinity, holiness and glories¹. (5)

Anyone who abandons all other hopes and stops relying on any other means to attain his spiritual objectives, and instead relies solely on worshipping Lord Ram and affectionately singing the Lord's hymns and glories --- (6)

--- Such a person is sure to cross this ocean-like world of birth and death; there is no doubt about it. [To wit, if a person relies only on worshipping Lord Ram and affectionately singing the hymns dedicated to the Lord that extol the Lord's glories, divinity and holiness, then it is sure that he will find liberation and deliverance for himself. He will not have to re-enter the cycle of birth and death.]

Forsooth and without gainsay, the astounding mystical powers that are inherent in Lord Ram's Name, and the spiritual significance of this holy, divine and sacred Name, is very evident and clearly manifested in the age of Kaliyug (more than any of the other three Yugs). (7)

[The above—i.e. the revelation of the stupendous powers and spiritual importance of Lord Ram's holy name—is one of the few excellent qualities and features of Kaliyug. There is another one though. And it is this—]

There is one more wonderful and unique quality or glory of Kaliyug (that none of the other Yugs possessed)—and it is that during this age even if a person's mind and heart (i.e. his Mana) wishes to do some meritorious deed (though he may not be actually able to do it), he still gets the credit of it as if he has physically done that good deed.

On the other hand, if a person merely thinks or wishes of doing some evil deed but actually does not do it, then the sin and taint (and therefore the punishment) associated with such bad or evil deed would not accrue to him². (8)

[Note—¹To wit, doing Yoga and Yagya and acquisition of Gyan would be difficult in Kaliyug. There is no need to waste energy and resources in their pursuit either. Whatever benefit they would give to the seeker is available to him simply by blissfully remembering Lord Ram and enjoying the delight that comes by singing the Lord's glories.

²It's a really win-win situation. The greatness and merit of Kaliyug is highlighted in these verses. In spite of all its blights, Kaliyug has two wondrous qualities—The first is that the greatest of spiritual rewards one can ever hope to get in one's life can be had simply by having affection for Lord Ram and taking refuge in the holy name of the Lord. And the second quality of Kaliyug is that if one has noble thoughts and

pious desires but is unable to actually carry out his plans and implement them in the world, he would still get credit for his virtuous way of thinking.

The intent is straightforward. A wise person is one who can gain credit balance to his spiritual account even without investing any effort by just harbouring good thoughts. This facility has been granted in Kaliyug because the situation all around would be so fearsome and foreboding that ordinary people would find it extremely difficult to do any good thing. So they are now encouraged to do it at least mentally; at the mental level if not at the physical level.

This incentive that a person would gain merit by harbouring noble thoughts and having auspicious desires is to ensure that a person would at least keep his mind and heart free from the sins, evils, vices, turpitude and perversity so ubiquitous in Kaliyug in the hope of accumulating some spiritual merit. Otherwise there are fair chances that all the people would be sucked in the vortex of sins and find it easy to flow with the current of vices so strong in Kaliyug because this is the easy way to live in the absence of any incentives to resist the countless temptations that overwhelm him at all times of his life during the predominately evil age of Kaliyug.

Now, there is another angle to this idea of the importance of having good thoughts. Since no one is perfect, a man may fear that if harbouring good thoughts would bring in merit and reward to him, no matter how invisible and subtle they are, then it is natural that bad thoughts would bring in demerit or punishment to him. To reassure a person who is in such a doubt, that he need not fear on this count, this immunity is provided that merely thinking of some stray bad thing will not cancel out his credit balance, for unless he actually does something that is evil and sinful, unless he carries out his sinful thoughts in practice, no demerit or punishment will become due to him.]

दो०. कलिजुग सम जुग आन नहिं जौं नर कर बिस्वास ।

गाइ राम गुन गन बिमल भव तर बिनहिं प्रयास ॥ १०३ (क) ॥

dōhā.

kalijuga sama juga āna nahir̥ṁ jaur̥ṁ nara kara bisvāsa.

gā'i rāma guna gana bimala bhava tara binahir̥ṁ prayāsa. 103 (a).

There is no other age as compared to Kaliyug if a person has faith in its rare virtues and capabilities (i.e. its ability to provide a person with the chance to attain his spiritual objectives most easily as has been enumerated in the foregoing verses herein above).

And one such rare ability or boon that Kaliyug possesses is this: A person can easily cross this vast and endless ocean-like world of transmigration known as 'Bhava' by simply singing (remembering, reciting and hearing) the divine glories and holy praises of Lord Ram.

[To wit, by simply remembering the sacred story of Lord Ram that describes the Lord's glories and the deeds done by him during his sojourn in the mortal world, and understanding the hidden spiritual message that this story contains, a seeker can attain spiritual joy, happiness, blessedness and beatitude that would have required him to undertake many elaborate rituals and strenuous efforts in all other eras that preceded Kaliyug.] (Doha no. 103-a)

प्रगट चारि पद धर्म के कलि महुँ एक प्रधान ।
जेन केन बिधि दीन्हें दान करइ कल्याण ॥ १०३ (ख) ॥

pragaṭa cāri pada dharma kē kali mahum̐ ēka pradhāna.
jēna kēna bidhi dīnhēm̐ dāna kara'i kalyāna. 103 (b).

There are said to be four pillars or pedestals of Dharma—i.e. there are four ways in which one can gain spiritual merit. [These four ways are (i) Satya—truthfulness; (ii) Daya—mercy and compassion; (iii) Tapa—austerity and penance; and (iv) Daan—making charity and giving alms.]¹

In Kaliyug, the one pillar that is deemed to be the chief one is the act of doing 'Daan'—i.e. giving alms and making charity selflessly as a means of getting spiritual rewards or accumulating spiritual merit. No matter in which way one does 'Daan', it would always serve him in good stead², it would always be conducive for his spiritual good and welfare. (Doha no. 103-b)

[Note—¹Refer to: Srimad Bhagwat Mahapuran, 12/3/18, which lists these four as being the four pedestals of Dharma.

In the same vein, there are said to be four ways in which a creature accumulates 'spiritual demerit'. These are said to be the four pillars or pedestals of 'A-dharma', i.e. the opposite of 'Dharma'. They are—(i) Asatya Bhasan—speaking a lie; falsehood; (ii) Hinsa—violence; (iii) Trishna or Asantosh—never ending desires and wants; lack of contentedness; (iv) Dwesh or Kalaha—having enmity, jealousy, ill-will and malice for one and all. Refer: Srimad Bhagwat Mahapuran, 12/3/20.

²Even from the perspective of doing anything for some worldly gain, a person who does charity is honoured and respected by others in the society. It helps to hide or veil many of his other faults, and he acquires a lot of goodwill and a good name for himself in this world. There is so much happiness in the 'act of giving' that one who engages in it discovers a level of inner peace, joy and contentedness that no other single act would give him.]

चौ०. नित जुग धर्म होहिं सब केरे । हृदयँ राम माया के प्रेरे ॥ १ ॥

सुद्ध सत्व समता बिग्याना । कृत प्रभाव प्रसन्न मन जाना ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

nita juga dharma hōhim̐ saba kērē. hṛdayam̐ rāma māyā kē prērē. 1.
sud'dha satva samatā bigyānā. kṛta prabhāva prasanna mana jānā. 2.

The characteristic features and qualities of each Yug (era) reveal themselves in the form of the behaviour and the attitude of its inhabitants as their hearts are motivated or inspired to act in a specific way in accordance with the wishes of Lord Ram's Maya (i.e. the Lord's powers to create delusions) during that period of time¹. (1)

During the first of the four-Yug cycle, i.e. during the Sata Yuga, the characteristic features are purity and truthfulness, equanimity and evenness, true knowledge and spiritual wisdom, and happiness and contentedness of the Mana (mind and heart)². (2)

[Note—¹The Maya of the Lord influences the heart of the creature and motivates him to act in a particular way that is characteristic of a given Yug. There are three Gunas or qualities which govern the behaviour and attitude of all living beings. These three Gunas are known as Sata Guna, Raja Guna and Tama Guna. They are invariably present in all the living beings in this world, but their ratio or proportion differs from individual to individual. The greater is the quantum of the Sata Guna in a person, the more inclined would he be towards following the path of spiritualism, wisdom, truth, righteousness, probity and a moral way of life. On the other hand of the scale, the greater is the dominance of the Tama Guna, the greater is the propensity for committing evil deeds, indulging in sins, vices, immorality and degrading actions. The Raja Guna acts as the oil of the machinery that keeps the person on the move on the path of his choice in this world; it is this Raja Guna that motivates a creature to get involved in worldly activities. So, if the Raja Guna is associated with a greater amount of the Sata Guna, the creature is inclined to do good things in life because this is the character of the Sata Guna. On the other hand, if the Tama Guna is in greater proportion, then the same Raja Guna propels the creature towards doing evil things in life because this is the character of the Tama Guna. When Kaliyug reaches its zenith, the Tama Guna will be so overriding and overwhelming that all goodness associated with Sata Guna would be totally eclipsed, and it's place would be occupied by the worst of characters that one can imagine.

²Now, as we see, during Sata Yug, the 'Sata Guna', i.e. the best of the qualities that one can hope to acquire, is the dominant factor and the motivator for all the living beings. And therefore, this age is very holy, pious and peaceful. It gives its inhabitants a lot of joy and happiness, and there is contentedness and fulfilled wishes all around, there is a lot of wisdom, spiritual awareness, truthfulness, probity and righteousness, and all other characteristics that define the rewards that accrue by following the path of 'Dharma'.]

सत्त्व बहुत रज कछु रति कर्मा । सब बिधि सुख त्रेता कर धर्मा ॥ ३ ॥

बहु रज स्वल्प सत्त्व कछु तामस । द्वापर धर्म हरष भय मानस ॥ ४ ॥

satva bahuta raja kachu rati karmā. saba bidhi sukha trētā kara dharmā. 3.
bahu raja svalpa satva kachu tāmasa. dvāpara dharma haraṣa bhaya mānasa.
4.

[Now, the characteristic features of the second era known as 'Treta Yug' are being enumerated.] When the Sata Guna still is the dominant factor (though not as strong and powerful as it was during the Sata Yug), when there is a little bit of Raja Guna (which motivates a creature to indulge in worldly activities and enjoy its material sense objects), when one finds interest and gets joy in doing one's worldly deeds, and when there is an overall environment of comfort, pleasure and happiness—then these features are said to be characters of Treta Yug. (3)

[Gradually and almost imperceptibly, the decline and degradation sets in.] So, when the Raja Guna becomes ascendant and more dominant as compared to the Sata Guna which is on the decline as it is reduced to being merely a feeble image of its robust past and is almost sidelined, when Tama Guna starts emerging and making its presence felt, when the Mana (mind and heart) has both happiness and fears (as compared to the previous age when there was no spiritual fear of any kind—such as the fear of death, the fear of sufferings caused by emerging unrighteousness, sins and evil tendencies, etc.)—these are said to be the characters or characteristic features of the third age known as ‘Dwapar Yug’. (4)

तामस बहुत रजोगुन थोरा । कलि प्रभाव बिरोध चहुँ ओरा ॥ ५ ॥
बुध जुग धर्म जानि मन माहीं । तजि अधर्म रति धर्म कराहीं ॥ ६ ॥

tāmasa bahuta rajōguna thōrā. kali prabhāva birōdha cahum'ōrā. 5.
budha juga dharma jāni mana māhīm. taji adharma rati dharma karāhīm. 6.

During the fourth age known as ‘Kaliyug’, there is a predominance of the Tama Guna (the darkness and grossness of character of all living beings marked by all varieties of evil, sins, vices and everything that is in-auspicious and un-righteous) while the Raja Guna is on the decline and reduced to a fraction of its earlier form, when there is enmity, hatred, opposition and ill-will all around—then this should be regarded as being the character of Kaliyug and its effect.

[To wit, during Kaliyug, all the creatures would be affected by Tama Guna and lose their happiness and peace of mind. There would be restlessness and anxiety; no one will have any kind of peace.] (5)

Those who are really wise and intelligent realise that these features are inherent characters of this age (of Kaliyug). So they have patience, and remain calm and poised internally; they take diligent care to follow the path of Dharma and refrain from doing anything that falls under the opposite path called Adharma¹. (5)

[Note—¹Wise and intelligent person don't get agitated when they see so much restlessness, sorrows, fears, uncertainties and depravity all around them. They understand that it is a normal thing in the age of Kaliyug. So instead of getting perturbed and anxious, they maintain their calm and peace of mind, and resisting all temptations and destructions they are careful in what they do themselves in order to remain steadfast on their spiritual path and their aim of life, which is to find freedom from the cycle of birth and death, and attain liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation. They do all they can do to remain free from falling into to trap of Kaliyug in which the rest of the creatures have fallen.

They know the difference between ‘Dharma’ and ‘Adharma’ as explained in Doha no. 103-b herein above, and guard themselves accordingly.]

काल धर्म नहिं व्यापहिं ताही । रघुपति चरन प्रीति अति जाही ॥ ७ ॥
नट कृत बिकट कपट खगराया । नट सेवकहि न व्यापइ माया ॥ ८ ॥

kāla dharma nahim byāpahim tāhī. raghupati carana prīti ati jāhī. 7.
naṭa kṛta bikaṭa kapaṭa khagarāyā. naṭa sēvakahi na byāpa'i māyā. 8.

[It is to be noted here that—] Those who have great devotion and affection for the holy feet of Lord Ram, they are not affected or influenced by any of the negative traits of Kaliyug; they are immune to the bad effects of Kaliyug. (7)

Oh the King of Birds (“khagarāyā”—i.e. Garud)! The way a puppet dances and acts on stage fills the spectators with wonder and astonishment, but the puppeteer is not at all affected by it¹. (8)

[Note—¹The puppeteer knows very well that the puppet has no life of its own and therefore does nothing. It is merely doing what the puppeteer makes it do by manipulating the strings. So he goes about his job dispassionately and in a professional way. Likewise, those who are wise and intelligent do not get disturbed by the maverick tricks of Kaliyug because they know that all these tricks are being done by Lord Ram's Maya. So they quietly continue on their spiritual path with a calm mind and heart even as they show respect to the ‘puppeteer’ and wonder at his extraordinary skills. Here, the ‘puppeteer’ is Lord Ram who manipulates the world through the ‘string’ of delusions known as his Maya.]

दो०. हरि माया कृत दोष गुन बिनु हरि भजन न जाहि ।
भजिअ राम तजि काम सब अस बिचारि मन माहि ॥ १०४ (क) ॥

dōhā.

hari māyā kṛta dōṣa guna binu hari bhajana na jāhim.
bhaji'a rāma taji kām saba asa bicāri mana māhim. 104 (a).

Whatever that has been created by the powers of Maya of Lord Hari (i.e. whatever delusions that exist in this world), whether they are for good or bad, none of them can be controlled, overcome or got rid of without worshipping Lord Hari.

[This is because Lord Hari is the Master Puppeteer, and if someone wants to stop the puppet from doing anything that annoys him, he will have to request the puppeteer and not the lifeless puppet. So, if a person wants that delusions do not disturb him and leave him alone, he would have to request Lord Hari, the Lord of the Maya, to instruct this Maya to stop bothering him.]

Keeping this in mind, a wise person is he who worships Lord Ram selflessly, without having any expectations of reward or gains of any kind, and without asking the Lord to fulfil any worldly desires. [This is because if a person prays to Lord Ram to fulfil some worldly desire, then he is willingly allowing himself to fall in the trap of Maya. The Lord will surely fulfil his desires, but in the process the person gets sucked in the temptations of the material world and its endless allurements inasmuch as one desire leads to another, and consequently the grip of Maya gets firmer and firmer on this person.] (Doha no. 104-a)

तेहिं कलिकाल बरष बहु बसेउँ अवध बिहगेस ।

परेउ दुकाल बिपति बस तब मैं गयउँ बिदेस ॥ १०४ (ख) ॥

tēhiṁ kalikāla baraṣa bahu basē'um'avadha bihagēsa.
parē'u dukāla bipati basa taba mairi gaya'um'bidēsa. 104 (b).

Oh the King of Birds (bihagēsa)! Coming back to my story of my previous birth, I stayed in Ayodhya for many years during the age of Kaliyug as described above.

Once there was a grave famine in that place, and stricken by adversity and its accompanying misery I left that place and went elsewhere¹. (Doha no. 104-b)

[Note—¹There is no wonder famines and droughts and other natural calamities would occur during Kaliyug. When there is sin all around, Mother Nature punishes the creatures by way of famine and drought and plague and other rapidly spreading killer contagious diseases.

One must note the stark difference of the situation that prevailed in Ayodhya first during the reign of Lord Ram during the Treta Yug, and then during the time when Kaagbhusund lived there during Kaliyug. While during Kaliyug there was a great famine in Ayodhya, during the reign of Lord Ram the same place had no shortage of anything—there was abundance of rain and crop, and everyone lived a contented and happy life. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 20—to Doha no. 23.]

चौ०. गयउँ उजेनी सुनु उरगारी । दीन मलीन दरिद्र दुखारी ॥ १ ॥

गाँ काल कछु संपति पाई । तहँ पुनि करउँ संभु सेवकाई ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

gaya'um'ujēnī sunu uragārī. dīna malīna daridra dukhārī. 1.
ga'ēm'kāla kachu sampati pāī. taham'puni kara'um'sambhu sēvakāī. 2.

[Kaagbhusund said to Garud—] Oh the Enemy of Serpents (uragārī)! Listen. Feeling utterly miserable, being overcome with distress, suffering from extreme poverty and overwhelmed with sorrow, I had to (leave Ayodhya and) go to Ujjain. (1)

I abided there for some time and managed to acquire some wealth. So I decided to continue living there and began serving (or worshipping) Lord Shambhu (i.e. Lord Shiva, who is the patron deity of this place)¹. (2)

बिप्र एक बैदिक सिव पूजा । करइ सदा तेहि काजु न दूजा ॥ ३ ॥

परम साधु परमारथ बिंदक । संभु उपासक नहिं हरि निंदक ॥ ४ ॥

bipra ēka baidika siva pūjā. kara'i sadā tēhi kāju na dūjā. 3.
parama sādhu paramāratha bindaka. sambhu upāsaka nahim hari nindaka. 4.

At that place (Ujjai) there used to live a Brahmin who used to regularly worship and offer obeisance to Lord Shiva according to the established way as prescribed in the Vedas. This was his daily routine, and he engaged himself in doing nothing else. (3)

He was extremely pious and holy man who was an ardent follower of the path of true spiritual knowledge that leads to liberation and deliverance of the soul. Though he was a sincere devotee of Lord Shiva, but he never spoke anything against Lord Hari (Vishnu)¹. (4)

[Note—¹He was a wise man who was highly enlightened and knew the truth that there is no difference between Lords Shiva and Vishnu as both are different manifestations of the same Supreme Being known as Brahm, he respected both the Lords. So, though he was a ‘Shaivite’, i.e. a person whose deity is Lord Shiva, but he never insulted either Lord Vishnu or any of his followers who are known as ‘Vaishnavs’.]

तेहि सेवउँ मैं कपट समेता । द्विज दयाल अति नीति निकेता ॥ ५ ॥
बाहिज नम्र देखि मोहि साई । बिप्र पढ़ाव पुत्र की नाई ॥ ६ ॥

tēhi sēva'um^ṃ mairṃ kapaṭa samētā. dvija dayāla ati nīti nikētā. 5.
bāhija namra dēkhi mōhi sāl'īm. bipra paṛhāva putra kī nāl'īm. 6.

I used to serve him, but I was cunning and driven by selfishness of heart and impurity of mind. On the other hand, that Brahmin was very compassionate and kind, and was an abode of virtues of righteousness and probity. (5)

Oh Lord (“sāl'īm”—i.e. Garud)! When the simple-hearted and pious Brahmin saw my pretensions of politeness and eagerness to serve him, he was gracious enough to (neglect my internal cunningness and wickedness, and instead he used to) treat me like his son, and taught me with a lot of care and affection¹. (6)

[Note—¹The Brahmin was a saintly soul and an experienced person. So he must have obviously noticed my internal wickedness, but he never showed it outwardly. As I used to serve him and showed my eagerness to study under him, as well as to learn how to worship Lord Shiva, he welcomed me and showed affection to me instead of scolding me for playing tricks with him, and chasing me away.

Kaagbhusund was only interested in finding out how Lord Shiva is to be properly worshipped, and he had no real intention either to serve the Brahmin or gain knowledge of the scriptures from him, or benefit from his knowledge and wisdom in any other way. To create a good impression on the simple-hearted Brahmin, he pretended to be a faithful disciple who serves his Guru diligently and humbly. But this was only so that the Brahmin would teach him what he wished to learn. As we read on we shall see that once Kaagbhusund came to know the Mantra of Lord Shiva, he defied his Guru, or moral preceptor and teacher, and even went to the extent of insulting and disobeying him. This is why he is called ‘selfish, cunning and wicked’ here.

Nevertheless, the qualities of the Brahmin described here are the qualities of true saints. They find it hard to treat anyone harshly, are always ready to help others by trying to fulfil their wishes, and are always loving and forgiving towards even a

wicked person who comes to them asking for something though they are aware that he would become a nuisance for them later on.]

संभु मंत्र मोहि द्विजबर दीन्हा । सुभ उपदेस बिबिध बिधि कीन्हा ॥ ७ ॥
जपउँ मंत्र सिव मंदिर जाई । हृदयँ दंभ अहमिति अधिकाई ॥ ८ ॥

sambhu mantra mōhi dvijabara dīnhā. subha upadēsa bibidha bidhi kīnhā. 7.
japa'umṁ mantra siva mandira jā'ī. hrdayamṁ dambha ahamiti adhikā'ī. 8.

That noble Brahmin gave me the Mantra of Lord Shambhu (Shiva)¹; he preached and taught me in various ways. (7)

Having learnt the Mantra from him, I used to go to a temple of Lord Shiva and did Japa with that Mantra. [I used repeat the Mantra, and reflect and meditate on Lord Shiva while sitting in a Shiva temple.]

Despite apparently being a devotee of Lord Shiva and meditating upon him, I did not lose my internal wickedness. On the other hand, pretension, deceit, ego and arrogance increased in my heart (because I thought that no one worships Lord Shiva as correctly, properly, sincerely and diligently as I do). (8)

[Note—¹A Mantra of a deity is a special spiritual formula consisting of letter, words or phrases that are specific to that deity. Essentially they symbolise the deity's cosmic form and energy. This Mantra is used by the devotee to invoke the deity and is used by him to worship the deity, and do Japa and Dhyan (repetition, meditation, reflection and contemplation) with.]

दो०. मैं खल मल संकुल मति नीच जाति बस मोह ।
हरि जन द्विज देखें जरउँ करउँ बिष्नु कर द्रोह ॥ १०५ (क) ॥
dōhā.

mairṁ khala mala saṅkula mati nīca jāti basa mōha.
hari jana dvija dēkhēm jara'umṁ kara'umṁ biṣnu kara drōha. 105 (a).

Being of a pervert nature, low of birth and wicked in mind, I used to burn with jealousy at the very sight of devotees of Lord Hari (Vishnu) and learned Brahmins, treating them with utmost disdain and contempt. Not only that, I hated Lord Vishnu himself. (Doha no. 105-a)

सो०. गुर नित मोहि प्रबोध दुखित देखि आचरन मम ।
मोहि उपजड़ अति क्रोध दंभिहि नीति कि भावई ॥ १०५ (ख) ॥
sōraṭhā.

gura nita mōhi prabōdha dukhita dēkhi ācarana mama.
mōhi upaja'i ati krōdha dambhihi nīti ki bhāva'ī. 105 (b).

My Guru (my teacher, the Brahmin, who had taught me the Mantra of Lord Shiva and how to worship the Lord) was very sad at my bad behaviour and evil nature. Moved by compassion and love for me, he admonished me everyday, persistently trying his best to help me mend my wicked ways and somehow become more pious in my conduct.

The more he persisted in his effort to improve me, the more resistant I became to his advice and burnt with rage. Say, can a person who is shallow of knowledge and low mentality, one who is a haughty hypocrite¹, ever like hearing good counsel and being told about his failings? (Sortha no. 105-b)

[Note—¹Refer: Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes this Sortha.]

चौ०. एक बार गुर लीन्ह बोलाई । मोहि नीति बहु भाँति सिखाई ॥ १ ॥
सिव सेवा कर फल सुत सोई । अबिरल भगति राम पद होई ॥ २ ॥
caupā'ī.

ēka bāra gura līnha bōlā'ī. mōhi nīti bahu bhām'ti sikhā'ī. 1.
siva sēvā kara phala suta sō'ī. abirala bhagati rāma pada hō'ī. 2.

One day my Guru called me and taught me wisdom in every possible way he could think of. (1)

He advised me thus: 'Dear son (suta), the ultimate reward of serving and worshipping Lord Shiva is that a devotee develops steady and deep affection for and faith in the holy feet of Lord Ram (who was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu)¹.

[Therefore, you should not harbour ill-will against Lord Vishnu or his devotee the way you are doing at present. I sincerely advise you to change your attitude towards them, because Lord Shiva will surely not approve the way you are behaving. If the Lord gets angry at you, you will have to suffer a lot.] (2)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (i) Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 138; (ii) Lanka Kand, Doha no. 2; (iii) Uttar Kand, Doha no. 45.]

रामहि भजहिं तात सिव धाता । नर पावँर कै केतिक बाता ॥ ३ ॥
जासु चरन अज सिव अनुरागी । तासु द्रोहँ सुख चहसि अभागी ॥ ४ ॥

rāmahi bhajahim tāta siva dhātā. nara pāvam'ra kai kētika bātā. 3.
jāsu carana aja siva anurāgī. tāsu drōham'sukha cahasi abhāgī. 4.

My dear (tāta)! When both the senior-most Gods of creation, i.e. Lord Shiva (the concluder of creation and the third of the Trinity of Gods) and Lord Brahma (the creator and the senior God of the Trinity), worship Lord Ram and pay their obeisance to him, what do humble and lowly human beings count?¹ (3)

Oh you unfortunate fool of a doomed fate (*abhāgī*)! The Lord (Sri Ram) in whose holy feet Lords Shiva and Brahma have affection—say, how do you ever hope to have your welfare by harbouring enmity and jealousy for the same Lord and his holy feet?’ (4)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (i) Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 51; (ii) Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 63; (iii) Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 22; (iv) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 124.]

हर कहूँ हरि सेवक गुर कहेऊ । सुनि खगनाथ हृदय मम दहेऊ ॥ ५ ॥
अधम जाति मैं बिद्या पाएँ । भयउँ जथा अहि दूध पिआएँ ॥ ६ ॥

hara kahūṁ hari sēvaka gura kahē'ū. suni khaganātha hṛdaya mama dahē'ū.
5.

adhama jāti maim̐ bidyā pā'ēm̐. bhaya'um̐ jathā ahi dūdha pi'ā'ēm̐. 6.

[Kaagbhusund told Garud—] Oh the Kings of Birds (*khaganātha*)! When I heard that my Guru was saying that Lord Shiva worships and serves Lord Hari (Lord Vishnu, and by extension Lord Ram—implying that Lord Ram was senior to Shiva), my heart burnt with indignation. (5)

Being of a lowly birth and vile in mind, the little knowledge that I had managed to gain (from my Guru about the Mantra of Lord Shiva and how to worship the Lord in a systematic manner) made me puffed-up in false pride and I began hallucinating just like a serpent that becomes all the more poisonous when it is fed with milk¹. (6)

[Note—¹To wit, instead of becoming wise, pious and humble by the acquisition of knowledge and good spiritual advice from my teacher as well as by worshipping Lord Shiva, I became just the opposite. A person would feed a snake with milk as part of his religious views or ritual, thinking that the snake is a representative form of the ‘Seshnath’, the cosmic Serpent on whose coiled back Lord Vishnu rests in the cosmic ocean of milk, and who supports the earth on his thousand hoods. But this snake is so ungrateful that it would have no compunction and regret to bite at the first opportunity even its well-wisher and benefactor, because it does not understand or have any idea about the pious thoughts of the person who is feeding it with milk in the belief that he is offering it as an obeisance to the cosmic Serpent who serves the Supreme Being by acting as the Lord’s resting place, as well as the one who supports the earth, and the life that thrives on it, on its thousand hoods.]

मानी कुटिल कुभाग्य कुजाती । गुर कर द्रोह करउँ दिनु राती ॥ ७ ॥
अति दयाल गुर स्वल्प न क्रोधा । पुनि पुनि मोहि सिखाव सुबोधा ॥ ८ ॥

mānī kuṭila kubhāgya kujātī. gura kara drōha kara'um' dinu rātī. 7.
ati dayāla gura svalpa na krōdhā. puni puni mōhi sikhāva subōdhā. 8.

I was so proud, haughty and arrogant, so wicked and vile by my nature, so unfortunate and dumb-witted, and so lowly of birth that I began to harbour ill-will and hatred for my Guru day and night (inspite of the fact that my Guru was so loving and caring for me, and he always thought of my good and welfare). (7)

Inspite of my arrogance and stubbornness, the Guru was very compassionate, merciful and considerate for he never became angry at me at all; he never showed even a whit of annoyance at me and my rudeness. Instead of getting irritated and angry, he was patient with me, repeatedly trying to inspire me to follow the right and honourable path of prudence, wisdom and piety. (8)

जेहि ते नीच बड़ाई पावा । सो प्रथमहिं हति ताहि नसावा ॥ ९ ॥
धूम अनल संभव सुनु भाई । तेहि बुझाव घन पदवी पाई ॥ १० ॥

jēhi tē nīca barā'ī pāvā. sō prathamahim hati tāhi nasāvā. 9.
dhūma anala sambhava sunu bhā'ī. tēhi bujhāva ghana padavī pā'ī. 10.

It is said that a wicked person would have no compunctions or regrets in betraying a person who had been his benefactor; a vile fellow would be the first person to willingly eliminate or destroy or ruin or dishonour someone who had earlier been instrumental in his rise and acquisition of respect in the world¹. (9)

Listen oh brother (sunu bhā'ī)! The smoke that arises from a fire becomes so haughty when it rises in the sky and acquires the form of a cloud that it extinguishes the fire itself that had produced this smoke!² (10)

[Note—¹A wicked person would not think twice before betraying someone who is his best friend and benefactor. He is so evil-minded and ungrateful that he will have no regret in dishonouring someone who had played a pivotal role in making him successful in life.

²The smoke from a fire rises in the sky and is dark in colour like the rain-bearing cloud. The smoke begins to feel proud of its newly acquired status and resemblance to the cloud. If strong wind does not blow it away, it would suffocate the smouldering fire and extinguish it. This happens because the thick smoke chokes out all oxygen around the fire, and without it the fire slowly dies away.

This analogy is cited to stress the point that a wicked person of a selfish and vile mind would have no hesitation in going against someone who had helped him when he needed support and help in life. He is so ungrateful, unfaithful and thankless that he would forget all his obligations and duties towards his benefactor and well-wisher once his selfish needs are fulfilled.]

रज मग परी निरादर रहई । सब कर पद प्रहार नित सहई ॥ ११ ॥

मरुत उड़ाव प्रथम तेहि भरई । पुनि नृप नयन किरीटन्हि परई ॥ १२ ॥

raja maga parī nirādara raha'ī. saba kara pada prahāra nita saha'ī. 11.
maruta uṛāva prathama tēhi bhara'ī. puni nr̥pa nayana kirīṭanhi para'ī. 12.

{Some other instances are given here to show how a lowly, vile and wicked person behaves.}

The dust that lies on the ground is so inconsequential, lowly and humble that it is subjected to constant insult and contempt by one and all, because those who walk on the ground keep kicking and trampled it underfoot. (11)

But when the wind lifts it up, the dust (expands with pride and haughtily) fills the whole of the air around it. Eventually it finds a place to rest on the crown of great kings and fills their eyes¹. (12)

[Note—¹To wit, the dust has no regret in causing discomfort to the king by settling in his eyes though it has already found an exalted place to rest in the crown of the king. The same dust was earlier trampled underfoot, but now it rests on the king's crown, a privilege that is rare to get. Resting on the crown of the king implies that the dust has been given immense honour by the king. So the lowly dust becomes haughty and proud of its newly acquired status, and instead of being thankful to the wind of lifting it from its earlier lowly existence on the ground and elevating it to the high pedestal of a king's crown, and to the king as well for giving it the honour of allowing it to rest on his head which wears the crown, the wicked dust would soon show its true colour by turning hostile towards those who have shown it some favour. It would land in the king's eyes, causing a lot of discomfort to him. The king curses both the wind and the dust, and immediately washes the dust off his eyes as well as the crown.

The people too curse the wind for raising so much dust that their homes get filled with it and needs cleaning once again.

Had the wind not lifted the dust it would not have caused annoyance to one and all; everyone would have welcomed the gust of wind for its cooling and soothing effect on a hot day. Now everyone starts cursing the same wind because it had been moved by pity for the most pitiable condition of the dust that was lying on the ground and kicked by all, and had decided to lift or raise it from the ground so that it is no longer kicked and trampled upon underfoot so mercilessly.

The lowly dust that is treated with contempt by the people as it is kicked and trampled under foot by all constantly forgets its obligations towards either the wind that has lifted it from its condemned life or the king who has allowed it to rest on his crown. It soon irritates the 'king' by falling in his eyes, and it makes the 'wind' get cursed by ordinary people for filling their homes with dirt.]

सुनु खगपति अस समुझि प्रसंगा । बुध नहिं करहिं अधम कर संग्गा ॥ १३ ॥

कबि कोबिद गावहिं असि नीती । खल सन कलह न भल नहिं प्रीती ॥ १४ ॥

sunu khagapati asa samujhi prasaṅgā. budha nahim karahim adhama kara saṅgā. 13.

kabi kōbida gāvahiṁ asi nīṭi. khala sana kalaha na bhala nahiṁ prīṭi. 14.

Oh the King of Birds (khagapati)! Listen. Keeping these things in mind, those who are wise and intelligent do not keep company of wicked, vile and lowly people. (13)

Those who are wise and learned say that it is neither good to have enmity (ill-will and malice) nor develop a friendly (or close) relationship with such people. [To wit, it is wise to keep a safe distance from those who are wicked in heart, are wild and rogue by temperament, and have an evil mind. No one knows when they will stab one behind one's back.] (14)

उदासीन नित रहिअ गोसाईं । खल परिहरिअ स्वान की नाई ॥ १५ ॥
मैं खल हृदयँ कपट कुटिलाई । गुर हित कहइ न मोहि सोहाई ॥ १६ ॥

udāsīna nita rahi'a gōsā'īṁ. khala parihari'a svāna kī nā'īṁ. 15
maiṁ khala hṛdayaṁ kapaṭa kuṭilā'ī. gura hita kaha'i na mōhi sōhā'ī. 16.

Oh Lord (gōsā'īṁ)! One should always be indifferent to and aloof from such people (who are wicked, vile, pervert and lowly). It is better to abandon them from a safe distance like one shoos away a wicked dog. (15)

I was a nasty person of evil nature. My heart was corrupt and filled with wickedness. That is why though my Guru used to tell me those things that were for my own good and welfare, I could not tolerate him or his advice.

[Because of my wicked mind and jealous heart, I thought that my teacher is constantly nagging at me, unnecessarily finding faults in me, does not like my rise as a devotee of Lord Shiva, and is trying to impose his will upon me. So the more he tried to persuade me to improve myself, the more annoyed and stubborn I became.] (16)

दो०. एक बार हर मंदिर जपत रहेउँ सिव नाम ।
गुर आयउ अभिमान तें उठि नहिं कीन्ह प्रनाम ॥ १०६ (क) ॥

dōhā.

ēka bāra hara mandira japata rahē'um' siva nāma.
gura āya'u abhimāna tēṁ uṭhi nahiṁ kīnha pranāma. 106 (a).

One day I was doing Japa using Lord Shiva's holy name (i.e. I was meditating upon Lord Shiva by repeating his holy name as a Mantra to concentrate my mind on the Lord).

Just at that time my Guru arrived, but out of my pride and haughtiness I did not get up to bow before him to pay my respects. (Doha no. 106-a)

सो दयाल नहिं कहेउ कछु उर न रोष लवलेस ।

अति अघ गुर अपमानता सहि नहिं सके महेस ॥ १०६ (ख) ॥

sō dayāla nahim kahē'u kachu ura na rōṣa lavalēsa.
ati agha gura apamānatā sahi nahim sakē mahēsa. 106 (b).

He (my Guru) was a very kind-hearted individual, so he did not feel offended or became angry at my irreverent and arrogant behaviour.

But Lord Mahesh (Shiva) could not tolerate this grave sin of showing such great disrespect to the Guru.

[Lord Shiva could not tolerate or condone that someone who calls himself his devotee would be so sinful and pervert as to humiliate his own Guru who had shown him how to worship the Lord in the first place. If Shiva turned a blind eye to this open violation of principles of good behaviour, then the very foundation of Dharma, or proper conduct, would be shaken.] (Doha no. 106-b)

चौ०. मंदिर माझ भई नभ बानी । रे हतभाग्य अग्य अभिमानी ॥ १ ॥

जद्यपि तव गुर के नहिं क्रोधा । अति कृपाल चित सज्जक बोधा ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

mandira mājha bha'ī nabha bānī. rē hatabhāgya agya abhimānī. 1.
jadyapi tava gura kēm nahim krōdhā. ati krpāla cita samyaka bōdhā. 2.

An ethereal voice was heard from the center of the temple. It strongly admonished and cursed me in the following way: “Oh you evil-natured, ill-fated, proud and haughty fellow of a vile and sinful nature (rē hatabhāgya agya abhimānī). (1)

Though the Guru has no anger in him as he is very merciful and compassionate by his nature and temperament, and possesses true knowledge and wisdom.

[Lord Shiva sternly admonished me while praising my learned Guru when he said: “Listen, your Guru is a saintly person who pays no heed to such things as someone showing honour or dishonour to him. He has equanimity and forgiveness befitting of a truly self-realised person. You are so utterly stupid and lowly that you have not understood his greatness, and other than learning my Mantra and the process of offering worship to me from him, you have learnt nothing else. You are so lowly, uncultured and dumb that you don't even know the basic principles of courteous behaviour—that one should always stand up to show respect when someone senior comes in. So you must be punished.”] (2)

तदपि साप सठ दैहउँ तोही । नीति बिरोध सोहाइ न मोही ॥ ३ ॥

जौं नहिं दंड करौं खल तोरा । भ्रष्ट होइ श्रुतिमारग मोरा ॥ ४ ॥

tadapi sāpa saṭha daiha'um' tōhī. nīti birōdha sōhā'i na mōhī. 3.
jaum nahim daṇḍa karaum khala tōrā. bhraṣṭa hō'i śrutimāraga mōrā. 4.

But oh you wicked and stupid fool (*saṭha*), inspite of that (i.e. though your Guru has forgiven you, but) I shall curse you. I can't tolerate violation of propriety and probity; I can't allow transgression of the principles of righteous behaviour and proper conduct. (3)

Oh you wicked fellow (*khala*)! If I don't punish you, then the sanctity of the holy path that leads to me (Lord Shiva) as espoused by the Vedas would be undermined and violated. (4)

[Lord Shiva said—“Though your Guru has forgiven you for your irreverent and arrogant behaviour because he is a saintly person of a merciful and forgiving nature, but I won't allow this to happen. The Vedas have laid down certain strict and basic norms of behaviour that one should follow in order to attain Lord God, one of whose forms is Lord Shiva. If one is allowed to take liberty with this path then the whole edifice of Dharma would crumble. To show respect to one's Guru or teacher is one of the basic principles of good behaviour and good manners even if one does not cite any scripture to stress its importance. And you are such a foolish person that you don't have the basic sense of showing courtesy to your teacher. Such disciples should be sternly dealt with, for if I tolerate you then the holy path that leads one to me would be tarnished with the taint of not only wildness and indiscipline but also of showing irreverence towards those who are pious and saintly and devoted to me like your Guru is. This is not allowed at all. Therefore, I must punish you.”]

जे सठ गुर सन इरिषा करहीं । रौरव नरक कोटि जुग परहीं ॥ ५ ॥
त्रिजग जोनि पुनि धरहिं सरीरा । अयुत जन्म भरि पावहिं पीरा ॥ ६ ॥

jē saṭha gura sana iriṣā karahīm. raurava naraka kōṭi juga parahīm. 5.
trijaga jōni puni dharahim sarīrā. ayuta janma bhari pāvahim pīrā. 6.

[And what should be your punishment? It is this—] A person who is stupid enough to harbour ill-will and malice towards his Guru is condemned to a horrible hell known as 'Raurav' for countless Yugs (i.e. for numerous eras, or a very long period of time). (5)

When they get out of this great hell, they take a lowly birth as a 'Trijag' ("trijaga"; i.e. in a sub-human species such land-bound animals or as air-bound birds), and continue to suffer huge torments for ten thousand successive births (i.e. they suffer continuously for countless births, without any respite). (6)

बैठ रहेसि अजगर इव पापी । सर्प होहि खल मल मति व्यापी ॥ ७ ॥
महा बिटप कोटर महुँ जाई । रहु अधमाधम अधगति पाई ॥ ८ ॥

baiṭha rahēsi ajagara iva pāpī. sarpa hōhi khala mala mati byāpī. 7.
mahā biṭapa kōṭara mahum̐ jāī. rahu adhamādhama adhagati pāī. 8.

Oh you sinful one (*pāpī*)! Since you wished to keep sitting on the ground when your Guru arrived, so be it; keep sitting where you are like a python in front of your Guru!

Oh you wicked fellow (khala) of low wisdom and degraded mind (mala mati byāpī)!
Be condemned to become a serpent¹! (7)

Oh you vilest of vile fellows (adhamādhama)! Go slither away and live hidden
inside a dark hollow of a huge tree somewhere.” (8)

[Note—¹Just like a python that is so lazy that it keeps lying on its belly without moving even for food, you too shall turn into a loathsome serpent who is abhorred by all. You were too lazy to get up and show respect to your Guru, you acted as if you don't have legs to lift you from your sitting posture. You prefer to keep sitting on the ground, so let it be so—become a serpent and be grounded for life. You need not stand up again any more, because you will be a serpent. That is what you prefer—to keep sitting on the ground. So be it.]

दो०. हाहाकार कीन्ह गुर दारुन सुनि सिव साप।

कंपित मोहि बिलोकि अति उर उपजा परिताप ॥ १०७ (क) ॥

dōhā.

hāhākāra kīnha gura dārūna suni siva sāpa.
kampita mōhi bilōki ati ura upajā paritāpa. 107 (a).

The Guru was aghast and he raised a cry of pity when he heard the terrible curse of Lord Shiva. When he saw me shivering with fear and extremely terrified, he felt immensely sorry and agonised in his heart for me and my doomed fate. (Doha no. 107-a)

करि दंडवत सप्रेम द्विज सिव सन्मुख कर जोरि।

बिनय करत गदगद स्वर समुझि घोर गति मोरि ॥ १०७ (ख) ॥

kari daṇḍavata saprēma dvija siva sanmukha kara jōri.
binaya karata gadagada svāra samujhi ghōra gati mōri. 107 (b).

When the Brahmin thought of my horrifying destiny because of the curse of the Lord, he was so moved with pity that he prostrated before Lord Shiva, joined his palms as a gesture of respect, and prayed to him with a voice choked with emotions. (Doha no. 107-b)

{What follows herein below is an excellent prayer dedicated to Lord Shiva. The choice of words and their use for the purpose of construction of complex phrases that are expertly structured in such a fine manner that all grammatical parameters of a perfect verse are adhered to is really a literary jewel in its own right. The supremacy, divinity, holiness and glories of Lord Shiva have been brought to the fore in this prayer.}

छं०. नमामीशमीशान निर्वाणरूपं । विभुं व्यापकं ब्रह्म वेदस्वरूपं ॥ १ ॥

chanda.

namāmiśamiśāna nirvāṇarūpaṁ. vibhuṁ vyāpakaṁ brahma vēdasvarūpaṁ. 1.

‘Oh Isha (Lord of the world)! I reverentially bow before you. You are the cardinal deity of creation and the patron god of the Ishan direction (north-east). You are an image of Nirvaan (final liberation and deliverance; i.e. you exemplify the state of being attained by a creature when he is delivered from the fetters of this world and its attendant delusions).

You are Vibhu (the Supreme Being who is almighty, omnipresent, all-pervading, all-encompassing, magnanimous, eternal, infinite, all-powerful, immovable, constant and immutable). You are Vyaapak (one who is immanent, omnipresent, all-pervading, all-incorporating and all-encompassing). You are a personified form of Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness and the Supreme Being, as well as the Vedas (the embodiment of Gyan—i.e. knowledge, wisdom, gnosis and enlightenment). (1)

निजं निर्गुणं निर्विकल्पं निरीहं । चिदाकाशमाकाशवासं भजेऽहं ॥ २ ॥

nijaṁ nirguṇaṁ nirvikalpaṁ nirīhaṁ. cidākāśamākāśavāsaṁ bhajē'haṁ. 2.

You have realised your true ‘self’ and are therefore firmly established in it. [This ‘true self’ is the pure conscious Atma, the soul.]

Hence, you possess all the virtues of the Atma—such as being Nirguna (without any Gunas or qualifications or qualities; without any taints associated with the different aspects of creation, such as the good, the bad, the mediocre, and everything in between).

You are Nirvikalp (one of your own kind; without any alternatives or parallel or comparison; without any sort of divisions; uniform and seamless).

You are Niriha (without any desires, passions, yearnings or wants; to be totally dispassionate and non-desirous of anything; to be complete detached from anything and everything).

You live in a sublime and ethereal form as the Consciousness that pervades the subtle aspect sky in this creation (such as the one that fills all the space in the heart of the living beings). Not only this, you are present throughout the visible form of this sky that fills this world. And you wear the sky (firmament) as your cloth; you are surrounded by the subtle sky from all sides.

[This is an important observation: Lord Shiva represents the enlightened creature who has realised the true nature of his ‘self’ as the Atma, the pure consciousness. This Atma is a miniscule or microcosmic form of the Parmatma, the cosmic Atma. This Atma lives in the subtle space—the sky—of the gross organ known as the heart present in all persons. Just as no one can live without the heart, there can be no life without the Atma. This Atma is not a gross entity like the physical heart or the body in which it lives; it is rather an ethereal entity that is similar to the air that fills the entire length and breadth of the sky. Like the Atma that cannot be physically seen but its existence nevertheless cannot be doubted, Lord Shiva is the

cosmic Consciousness that is present everywhere in this creation, filling every nook and corner of the sky, though one cannot actually see the Lord with his physical organ of the eye.]

I have devotion for you; I worship you; I adore and admire you ('Bhajeemham'). (2)

निराकारमोँकारमूलं तुरीयं । गिरा ग्यान गोतीतमीशं गिरीशं ॥ ३ ॥

nirākāramōṅkāramūlaṁ turīyaṁ. girā gyāna gōtītamīśaṁ girīśaṁ. 3.

You are Nirakar (without any forms and attributes).

You are the root from which the ethereal sound of OM generates; you are a personified form of OM, the ethereal word representing the supreme transcendental Brahm and the cosmic Consciousness. [Or, you represent the primary Consciousness which generated the primordial 'sound' represented by the word OM that pervades the entire sky. It is from the energy of this sound that the rest of the creation has come into being. This subtle sound of OM pervades throughout the firmament of creation. It ought to be noted here that the 'sound', and the 'alphabets' of any language that represent the various notes of this sound, do not have any form—i.e. they are 'Nirakar'. Language is used to express an idea; OM expresses the idea known as Consciousness. Words and sound stand for life because dead entities don't speak or make any sound. Therefore, Lord Shiva is a personified form of all forms of life in this creation—both the animate as well as the inanimate. He is the supreme transcendental Consciousness from which the rest of the creation evolved.]

You exist in the Turiya (transcendental) state of consciousness. [The 'consciousness' has four states—(i) The waking state or Jagrat when the gross organs of the creature's body are active; (ii) The dreaming state or Swapna when his gross organs are inactive but the subtle mind and sub-conscious are active; (iii) the deep sleep state or Sushupta when even the mind becomes inactive, and the (v) Turiya state which is beyond the third state—hence is called the transcendental state of existence. This eclectic state is achieved by ascetics and self-realised persons only.]

You are beyond the reach (understanding and grasp) of Vaani (the faculty of speech; i.e. it is not possible to describe you or teach about you), Gyan (gnosis; knowledge based on reasoning and analytical thinking), and Indris (the sense organs of the body). [That is, no one can comprehensively understand you. The best way is to experience your presence in the form of the bliss obtained when one is blessed by the Holy Spirit you represent.]

You are the Lord of the mountains. [This is because Lord Shiva is supposed to live on high hills or mountains, submerged in deep meditation and contemplation, far away from the tumult of the mundane world and its accompanying horrors and delusions. His terrestrial abode is Mt. Kailash in the upper reaches of the northern Himalayan mountain ranges.] (3)

करालं महाकाल कालं कृपालं । गुणागार संसारपारं नतोऽहं ॥ ४ ॥

karālaṁ mahākāla kālaṁ kṛpālaṁ. guṇāgāra sansārapāraṁ natō'haṁ. 4.

Your form is ferocious and formidable. [This refers to his role as Rudra, the angry form as the concluder or annihilator of creation. He is fierce when he assumes this role—unrelenting, unforgiving and uncompromising. When sins, evil, demeanours and perversions reach a crescendo in creation, Lord Shiva becomes very angry. Despite all his efforts to spread wisdom and enlightenment, the creatures won't pay heed to him. So, like an annoyed king, this cosmic Emperor wishes to punish his mischievous subjects so that the pious and holy souls can live in peace. It is then that he becomes fierce. Otherwise, he is always calm and serenity personified; he is always depicted in the scriptures as well as iconography as a deity with close eyes sitting in meditative trance.]

Indeed, you are the Maha-kaal, the great God of Death personified. You are the death of even the God of Death. [All the Gods have a limited life-span. 'Death' is the most powerful force of creation. Birth is uncertain, but death is certain. 'Death' does not spare even the Gods who are supposed to be immortal. The 'Maha-kaal' form of Shiva refers to the supreme Brahm who exists even after the entire creation has been wiped out. 'Death' or 'Kaal' devours all living beings; Lord Shiva devours 'Kaal' itself. This is another way of saying that there is no one to devour or kill Shiva. Or, in other words, Shiva is eternal and without the fear of death. There is no God superior to him!]

You are Kripaāl (merciful, compassionate, gracious, kind).

You are Gunaagaar (an abode of all virtuous qualities). ['Guna' = qualities and auspicious virtues; 'Aagaar' = abode.]

You transcend this world ('Sansaar-paaram'). [That is, you have a transcendental existence; you are eternally free from the bondage of birth and death; you are free from all the taints and delusions associated with this world.]

I reverentially bow my head before you ('Natoham'). (4)

तुषाराद्रि संकाश गौरं गभीरं । मनोभूत कोटि प्रभा श्री शरीरं ॥ ५ ॥

tuṣārādri saṅkāśa gauram gabhīram. manōbhūta kōṭi prabhā śrī śarīram. 5.

You are like the snow-covered mountains—fair in complexion, and extremely calm, quiet and serene as well as serious and sober. [The snow-covered mountains are white in colour. The body of Shiva is smeared with the ash of the fire sacrifice, giving it the appearance of fairness. The deep recesses of the lofty mountains are calm and serene, so is Lord Shiva. No worldly sounds of the plains reach these mountains; they are free from all pollutions, congestions, the hustle and bustle and the turmoil of mundane life that are the hallmarks of the plains. Likewise, Lord Shiva is too calm and tranquility personified.]

Your divine form is as beauteous, radiant and charming as millions of Kaamdeos (the God of love, cupid and charms). (5)

स्फुरन्मौलि कल्लेलिनी चारु गंगा । लसद्भालबालेन्दु कंठे भुजंगा ॥ ६ ॥

sphuranmauli kallōlinī cāru gaṅgā. lasadbhālabālēndu kaṇṭhē bhujaṅgā. 6.

You carry the nectar-like and pristine water of the holy river Ganges on your head, locked in the thick matted hairs¹.

Your forehead is adorned by the crescent moon², and serpents are wrapped around your neck³. (6)

[Note—¹The imagery and symbolism are absolutely fabulous. The Ganges emerges from a glacier in the Himalayas, and then its streams swirl, foam, toss and turn as they meander their way down the curves of the mountain and its gorges and valleys. The thick lock of hairs on Shiva's head symbolizes these turns and curves, the gorges and valleys of the Himalayas. The when Ganges descended upon earth, the Gods feared that its thunderous descent with its thunderbolt like strike will split or crack the earth into two. So they prayed Lord Shiva to accept the holy river on his head. The Lord willingly accepted it, because he knew, being the most enlightened God, that this river has its origin from the toe-nails of Lord Vishnu, one of the other forms of the Viraat Purush, the all-encompassing Lord God. So this was a rare opportunity—to taste the nectar and the ambrosia of eternity and bliss emanating directly from Lord Vishnu's holy feet.

²Lord Shiva has been depicted in the Purans as having a crescent moon on his forehead. The moon is said to have sixteen Kalaas or phases, symbolising the sixteen Kalaas or aspects out of the total of sixty four Kalaas of the supreme Brahm. These sixteen Kalaas represent the visible world which is one fourth part of the entire creation consisting of the remaining of the Kalaas of Brahm. The visible world is called 'one Pada' or one leg or one aspect or Kalaa of Brahm. So, Shiva is the Lord who presides over the entire visible part of creation, and this world is his ornamentation in the sense that the Lord appears to be so beautiful if we consider the beauty of Nature as the astounding beauty and the expert craftsmanship of Shiva on display.

The moon present on Shiva's forehead also stands for the various eclectic qualities called Kalaas that he possesses and which adorn him like the moon. Symbolically, the devotee is advised to follow the example of his chosen deity Lord Shiva and note the symbolism of the Moon on his head. These eclectic qualities should be as prominent as the moon on the head of Shiva and they should form an integral part of the character of the devotee if he wishes to place himself in the position of being called a sincere follower and worshipper of Lord Shiva. Now let us have a glimpse of these Kalaas. They are the various eclectic qualities or attributes that an exalted man should possess, and briefly they are the following—(i) Shraddha (faith, believe, conviction, reverence, respect, devotion), (ii) Pran (life; the very essence of creation; the vibrations of life; the rhythm and essential functions pertaining to life), (iii) Akash (the all-pervading, all-encompassing sky or space element), (iv) Vayu (wind, air element), (v) Tej (energy, splendour, radiance, glory, might, majesty and fire element), (vi) Apaha (water element which is the all-important ingredient for life), (vii) 'Prithivi' (earth element which is the base or foundation for all mortal creation), (viii) Indriya (the organs of the body, both the organs of perception as well as of action), (ix) Mana (the mind and heart complex and their stupendous potentials), (x) Anna (food, the element without which life is simply not imaginable because it provides it with the basic nourishment and energy), (xi) Virya (semen, sperms, standing for courage, valour, potency, vitality and prowess), (xii) Tapa (austerity and penance, tolerance of hardship as a means of penitence, forbearance as well as carrying out strict religious vows in order to purify one's self)

(xiii) Mantra (the ability to give good advise, the power to contemplate and think, concentrate and focus, logically arrive at a conclusion), (xiv) Karma (taking actions and doing deeds), (xv) Loka (worldly interactions and behaviours), and (xvi) Naam (good name, fame, reputation, honour and glory).

Reference should be made to the Chandogya Upanishad, 6/7/1-6 of Sam Veda tradition in this context.

³The significance of the serpents wrapped around his body—The coiled serpents around his body indicate the fact that he constantly reminds himself of imminent death because serpents are very poisonous and symbolise immediate death. This helps him to remain focused on his spiritual aim of self-realisation instead of being attracted by the material charms of this material world of sense objects and getting deluded by them. The serpents also signify that Shiva is the Lord of death; he is death personified. Since he is able to wrap the serpents around his body and they cannot harm him, it indicates the fact that he has conquered death. That is why he is called ‘Mrityunjay’, the conqueror of death.

Again, the coiled serpents represent the Kundalini, the coiled subtle energy center at the base of the spine which when activated can entitle the spiritual aspirant to experience a burst of stupendous spiritual energy which provides him a glimpse of his own divine powers as well as the powers of the cosmic Consciousness present inside his bosom as his Atma. This Kundalini is activated by doing numerous Yoga exercises as described in the Upanishads on the subject of Yoga.

The coiled serpents may also represent cycles of time in the macrocosm and the basic energy of life in the microcosm in the form of reproductive and procreative energy.

These reptiles are very ferocious, dangerous, poisonous, and a symbol of male potency. The symbolism is that Shiva is a very potent God who can be extremely ruthless and unforgiving towards sinful creatures. He has exercised extreme self control and has ‘girdled’ or readied himself in preparation for enduring the greatest of hardships and sufferance for self-realisation as well as to provide the world with liberation and deliverance. The serpents warn his enemies not to fool around with him. That is also why he has fire in one of his hands. This fire signifies his ability to reduce to ashes the entire physical world consisting of falsehood and sins as well as eliminate all impurities, imperfections, faults and shortcomings that cripple the creature’s spiritual well being.

The Dakshin Murti Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 8, 10, 13, 15 and 19 affirms that Shiva is invariably wrapped by serpents.]

चलत्कुण्डलं भ्रू सुनेत्रं विशालं । प्रसन्नाननं नीलकण्ठं दयालं ॥ ७ ॥

calatkuṇḍalaṁ bhrū sunētraṁ viśālaṁ. prasannānanaṁ nīlakaṇṭhaṁ dayālaṁ.
7.

Large ear-rings dangle and sway majestically from your ears. Your eyes are broad and the eye-brows are magnificent to look at. You are cheerful, have a blue-tinged throat¹, and are most merciful and gracious. (7)

[Note—¹He is known as Neelkanth because he had drunk the horrible poison called Halaahal which emerged as a scorching froth at the time of churning of the ocean by

the Gods and the Demons in search of Amrit or the ambrosia of life and eternity. The legend goes that Lord Shiva had drunk the fierce poison that emerged at the time of churning of the celestial ocean in the beginning of creation by the Gods and the Demons in search of Amrit, the nectar of eternity and bliss. As soon as this boiling poison came out, there was the fear of the entire creation being scalded by its heat and ferocity. So Lord Shiva took the name of Lord Ram and gulped it in one mouthful. But the Lord knew that if this poison entered his abdomen the whole creation will be annihilated nevertheless as it resided in his abdomen. This shows that Lord Shiva is none but the supreme Brahm in whose body the entire creation resides like the embryo lives in its mother's womb. Hence, the merciful Lord kept the poison in his throat, giving it a purple colour.

Refer: (i) Sharav Upanishad, verse nos. 11, 16. (ii) Mahabharat, Adi Parva, Canto 18. In its verse no. 18 it is stated that—(a) Lord Shiva had drunk the poison while invoking and repeating the holy Mantra, and of course that Mantra was the holy name of Lord Ram because the Lord is Shiva's patron deity, and (b) this is the reason why his throat became dark blue or purple, because he had retained the poison in his throat instead of gulping it down in his stomach. (iii) The same fact is endorsed in Tulsidas' Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 19. (iv) Tulsidas' Kavitawali, Uttar Kand, verse nos. 157-158 allude to Lord Shiva drinking the Halaahal poison.]

मृगाधीशचर्मार्ज्वरं मुण्डमालं । प्रियं शंकरं सर्वनाथं भजामि ॥ ८ ॥

mrgādhīśacarmāmbaram muṇḍamālāṁ. priyaṁ śaṅkaraṁ sarvanātham bhajāmi. 8.

You are wrapped in the hide of a lion, the king of animals. ['Mrig' = wild animals of the forest; 'Dhish' = king.]

You wear a necklace of skulls. [This symbolizes the fact that Lord Shiva is always aware of death and keeps this garland around his neck to constantly remind him of the futility of worldly life.]

You are the Lord of all in this world; you are dear to them. Oh Lord Shankar—I worship you, adore you, am devoted to you, and always remember you ('Bhajaami'). (8)

प्रचंडं प्रकृष्टं प्रगल्भं परेशं । अखंडं अजं भानुकोटिप्रकाशं ॥ ९ ॥

pracaṇḍam prakṛṣṭam pragalbham parēśam. akhaṇḍam ajam bhānukōṭiprakāśam. 9.

You assume a fierce and formidable form ('Prachand'—in your form as Lord Rudra).

You are the supreme, the most exalted and the best God in creation ('Prakrishtha').

You are splendidous and radiant ('Pragalambha').

You are the Supreme Being known as Parmeshwar ('Paresham').

You are Akhand (immutable, indivisible, whole, steady, constant and uniform).

You are Aja (i.e. you have no birth or beginning; you are eternal and infinite). [Refer to verse no. 3 that says Lord Shiva is the personified form of OM.]

You are splendid and radiant as millions of suns put together. ['Bhanu' = sun; 'Koti' = million; 'Prakash' = illumination, light. This epithet for Lord Shiva assumes significance because he is deemed to be the most enlightened amongst the Gods. The 'illumination, light, splendour and radiance that is equivalent to the sun' is a metaphoric way of saying that the level of gnosis and enlightenment that Shiva has achieved is unmatched in this creation as the light of the sun which too is unrivalled in this world.] (9)

त्रयःशूल निर्मूलनं शूलपाणिं । भजेऽहं भवानीपतिं भावगञ्जं ॥ १० ॥

trayaḥśūla nirmūlanam śūlapāṇim. bhajē'ham bhavānīpatiṁ bhāvagamyam.
10.

You can neutralize all the three types of horrors ('Traya-Shul') that torment the creature in this world. [These three horrors are the following—(i) Adhidaivic= torments caused by malignant stars; (ii) Adhibhautic = torments caused by worldly entities such as enemies and opponents; and (iii) Adhyatmic = torments caused on the spiritual front.]

You hold a trident ('Trishul') in your hands. [This 'trident' stands for these three horrors, and the ability of the Lord to neutralize them.

I pay my obeisance, worship and adore ('Bhaje'ham') the Lord of Bhavaani ('Bhavaani' = Goddess Uma or Parvati, the Mother Goddess; 'Pati' = husband; Lord) with due faith, devotion and dedication ('Bhaava'). (10)

कलातीत कल्याण कल्पान्तकारी । सदा सज्जनानन्ददाता पुरारी ॥ ११ ॥

kalātīta kalyāṇa kalpāntakārī. sadā sajjanānandadātā purārī. 11.

You are beyond measurements and comparisons with any of the Kalaas¹ of creation.

You are the one who provides all auspiciousness and welfare ('Kalyaan') to the world, and are also the Lord who brings to an end the era of creation known as the Kalpa ('Kalpaanta-kaari'). [That is, on the one hand you take care of the welfare of the world, and on the other hand you end it also.]

You always give happiness ('Anand') to those who are gentle, simple, polite and honourable ('Sajjan'). [That is, those who are gentlemanly should have no cause of fear from you as the fierce God of Death who brings about the end of this world. It is only the wicked who need to harbour such fear.]

You are known as 'Purari'—the Lord who has vanquished and slayed the demon known as Tripuraa. [Or, it also might mean that 'you are the Lord who lives in the inner-self of the creature as his Atma. The word 'Pur' means an abode, and 'Purari' therefore means one who lives in this abode. According to the Upanishads, the supreme Brahm resides in the subtle heart of the creature as his Atma; Brahm lives inside the gross body of the creature as his pure consciousness. This alludes to the fact that Lord Shiva is none else but the supreme transcendental Brahm himself.] (11)

[Note—¹Kalaa: See note of stanza no. 6 herein above.

They are also called the sixteen *Aakarshini Shaktis* of creation that makes the possessor of these virtues much sought after in society. The word 'Aakarshini' means one that attracts others, and the word 'Shakti' of course means power. These are the following—(i) the power possessed by Pran, the vital life-sustaining winds or airs which maintain the vibrations, the rhythm and the essential functions of life in this creation; (ii) the power that comes with having Shraddha, i.e. having the eclectic virtues of faith, believe, conviction, reverence, respect and devotion that one has for his chosen deity, for the Supreme Being, and for the aim of life one has set for himself; (iii) the power to be as vast, all-pervading and all-encompassing as the Sky element known as 'Akash'; (iv) the power that is equivalent to that possessed by the Wind or Air element known as 'Vayu' that is so essential for life and its sustenance, and its proof lies in the fact one would die for want of air; (v) the power that is known as 'Tej', literally meaning vigour, vitality, energy, dynamism etc. that are depicted by the Fire element known as 'Agni' that is so essential for life and its sustenance, and its proof lies in the fact one would die for want of heat and warmth; (vi) the powers equivalent to those possessed by the Water element known as 'Apaha' that is so essential for life and its sustenance, and its proof lies in the fact one would die for want of water; (vii) the powers that are equivalent to the earth element known as 'Prithivi' which is the base or foundation for all mortal creation, the power that helps one to sustain others and therefore it makes a person much sought after; (viii) the powers displayed by the various sense organs of the body, called the 'Indriya', because it is these organs that enable the creature to achieve stupendous and most astounding tasks that are even beyond imagination; (ix) the immense and most lauded power of the mind and sub-conscious known as the 'Mana' which has formidable potentials and reach, keeping the creature firmly held in its grip, and without which power nothing can be done or any success achieved in any field whatsoever; (x) the power equivalent to that possessed by food or 'Anna' which is absolutely essential for survival and has such powerful force of attraction that people go long distances in search of food, even kill each other over it; (xi) the magnificent power to create and generate that is shown by the semen known as the 'Virya' which stands for courage, valour, potency, vitality and strength, vigour, dynamism etc., and anyone who possesses these glorious powers or virtues is surely much attractive and useful for others; (xii) the power that comes with doing 'Tapa', meaning austerity and penance, tolerance of hardship as a means of penitence, forbearance, carrying out strict religious vows in order to purify one's self, sufferance for some auspicious and noble cause, etc., virtues that make the person who possesses them have a magnetic appeal for others; (xiii) the powers inherent in the various mystical 'Mantras' which are great spiritual formulas with astounding potentials to fulfill all desires of the user; they are like keys to achieve success in any enterprise; it also refers to the ability to give good advice; the power to contemplate and think, concentrate and focus, and then logically arrive at a conclusion; the mystical powers that are an integral part of the Mantra and represent the various dynamic forces of Nature which could be invoked and harnessed by the creature and help him to utilise the latent cosmic energy, the strength, the dynamism and other magnificent powers incorporated in these Mantras for the benefit of creation at large; (xiv) the power to do various deeds and take actions, the strength, energy and stamina to perform even difficult tasks, the powers that are an integral part of the theory of doing Karma; (xv) the powers that makes a man so powerful that he can have control over the various worlds called the three Lokas, i.e. the mortal world

where the creatures live on earth, the lower heaven called the Antariksha where the junior Gods and the Spirits of dead ancestors live, and the upper heaven or Brahm Loka where the senior Gods live; it also refers to the terrestrial world, the heavens and the nether world, as well as the different worlds as experienced during the waking state, the dreaming state and the deep sleep states of existence of the consciousness; and finally (xvi) the inherent power in one's good name, the power of 'Naam'; this gives the person fame, acclaim, authority and respect in society; it bestows reputation, honour and glory that a person so much seeks in this world. This power of good name and its value in terms of making the man famous and eternal in the memory of others is so attractive that everyone wishes to gain some good name for himself in this world. A person with good name attracts others towards himself.]

चिदानंदसंदोह मोहापहारी । प्रसीद प्रसीद प्रभो मन्मथारी ॥ १२ ॥

cidānandasandōha mōhāpahārī. prasīda prasīda prabhō manmathārī. 12.

You are eternally in a state of blessedness and blissfulness ('Chidanand').

You remove doubts, perplexities, confusions, vexations and delusions of all kinds. ['Haari' = to dispel, remove; 'Sandoha; Moha' = doubts and delusions.]

Oh Lord ('Prabho') who had conquered the invincible enemy symbolized by passions and desires that churn the mind and the heart, creating a state of flux, causing restlessness, anxiety, loss of peace and happiness ('Manmathaari'). Please be gracious upon me; be pleased with me. (12)

न यावद् उमानाथ पादारविन्दं । भजंतीह लोके परे वा नराणां ॥ १३ ॥

न तावत्सुखं शान्ति सन्तापनाशं । प्रसीद प्रभो सर्वभूताधिवासं ॥ १४ ॥

na yāvad umānātha pādāravindam. bhajantīha lōkē parē vā narāṇām. 13.

na tāvatsukham śānti santāpanāśam. prasīda prabhō sarvabhūtādhivāsam. 14.

As long as a person does not worship and have devotion for the holy feet of the Lord of Uma (i.e. Lord Shiva) he cannot ever expect to have any sort of peace and comfort either in this world (current life) or in the world hereinafter (the next world after death; the next life), and neither is it possible for them to find freedom from the agony, horrors and distress caused by the three Taaps (torments). [These three types of torments are listed in verse no. 10.]

Oh Lord who resides in the heart of all living beings (as their Atma, their soul)¹! Kindly be pleased with me, be gracious upon me. (13-14)

[Note—¹The very fact that the worshipper addresses Lord Shiva as the one who lives in the heart or the inner being of all creatures underlines the high level of his erudition and sagacity. The worshipper is paying his obeisance to the supreme transcendental Brahm when he offers his prayers to Lord Shiva.

Non-duality between Brahm, Atma and Shiva is affirmed in the Rudra Upanishad, verse no. 3, stanza no. 1-2. The non-duality or oneness between Brahm and Shiva has been expounded in (i) Krishna Yajur Veda's Varaaha Upanishad, Canto

4, verse no. 32; Dakshin Murti or Dakshin Mukhi Upanishad. (ii) Atharva Veda's Atharva-shir Upanishad.

The Bhasma Jabal Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition was preached by Lord Shiva himself to sage Jabal Bhusund, and it highlights the fact that Lord Shiva is no ordinary God, or even a senior one being a member of the Trinity of Gods consisting of Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Rudra the concluder, but is the supreme transcendental Brahm himself personified. Shiva is the Supreme Being himself. Refer Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 1, paragraph no. 1; Canto 2, paragraph no. 3, 6-8.]

न जानामि योगं जपं नैव पूजां । नतोऽहं सदा सर्वदा शंभु तुज्यं ॥ १५ ॥

na jānāmi yōgam japam naiva pūjām. natō'ham sadā sarvadā śambhu tubhyam. 15.

I do not know how to do Yoga (meditation), Japa (repetition of the holy name of the Lord and his Mantras), or Puja (worship). Oh Lord Shambhu¹ (Shiva)! I only know one thing—and it is to always bow before you. [That is, I am not an expert in any of the methods prescribed by the scriptures for one's spiritual welfare and for honouring the Supreme Being. I am not literate and wise enough to know them. I am a humble being, so the only thing I can do and know about is to bow most reverentially before you, unpretentiously and sincerely.] (15)

[Note—¹Shambhu—Lord Shiva is known as Shambhu as he is the one who remains uniform, unruffled and calm even under adverse situations. Shambhu is one who exists or is established in an enlightened state of highest consciousness (i.e. is 'Bhu') that is marked by perfect self control, complete neutrality, absolute tranquility, serenity, peacefulness and blissfulness (i.e. is 'Sham'). Refer Atharvashikha Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Kandika 3.]

जरा जन्म दुःखौघ तातप्यमानं । प्रभो पाहि आपन्नमामीश शंभो ॥ १६ ॥

jarā janma duḥkhaugha tātapyamānam. prabhō pāhi āpannamāmīśa śambhō. 16.

Oh Lord Shambhu! Please save me from the horrifying agonies that accompany old age (death) and birth (i.e. from the endless cycle of birth and death). [In other words, be merciful to grant me Mukti or liberation and deliverance from the cycle of transmigration. Please ensure my emancipation and salvation inspite of the fact that I do not know how to offer formal forms of worship to you—see verse no. 15.]

Oh Lord God ('Prabho; Isha')! I come to seek shelter with you; please accept me.' (16)

श्लोक. रुद्राष्टकमिदं प्रोक्तं विप्रेण हरतोषये । १७ ॥

ये पठन्ति नरा भक्त्या तेषां शङ्भुः प्रसीदति ॥ १८ ॥

ślōka.

rudrāṣṭakamidaṁ prōktaṁ viprēṇa haratōṣayē. 17
yē paṭhanti narā bhaktayā tēṣāṁ śambhuḥ prasīdati. 18.

Shloka—This hymn known as ‘Rudra Ashtak’¹ was pronounced by the Vipra (Brahmin) in honour of Lord Har (Shiva). Those people who read it or use it to offer their obeisance to Lord Shiva, please the Lord; Lord Shiva is gracious upon them and pleased with them. (Sholka nos. 17-18). [This hymn precedes Doha no. 108 of Uttar Kand, Ram Charit Manas of Goswami Tulsidas.]

[Note—¹The word ‘Ashtak’ means ‘eight’. This hymn is called ‘Ashtak’ because it contains eight verses of two lines each, totaling sixteen lines in all.]

दो०. सुनि बिनती सर्वग्य सिव देखि बिप्र अनुरागु ।
पुनि मंदिर नभबानी भइ द्विजबर बर मागु ॥ १०८ (क) ॥

dōhā.

sunī binatī sarbagya siva dēkhi bipra anurāgu.
puni mandira nabhabānī bha'i dvijabara bara māgu. 108 (a).

When the all-knowing Lord Shiva heard the prayer (for mercy) and observed the sincerity and affection of the Brahmin, he was moved. So, once again an ethereal voice that was speaking from the sky was heard inside the temple. It said: “Oh exalted Brahmin (dvijabara)! Ask for a boon (as I am pleased with you).” (Doha no. 108-a)

जौं प्रसन्न प्रभु मो पर नाथ दीन पर नेहु ।
निज पद भगति देइ प्रभु पुनि दूसर बर देहु ॥ १०८ (ख) ॥

jaum prasanna prabhu mō para nātha dīna para nēhu.
nija pada bhagati dē'i prabhu puni dūsara bara dēhu. 108 (b).

The Brahmin replied, “Oh Lord, if you are indeed pleased with me and have affection for this humble person, then first and foremost please grant me the boon of having devotion for your holy feet. After that you can give me anything else which you would be pleased to give me¹. (Doha no. 108-b)

[Note—¹The learned Brahmin did not wish to lose this golden opportunity. So he asked for devotion first. There are other instances also where the devotee asks the Lord for grant of the boon of devotion if the Lord really is pleased with him and wishes to give him something.

For example, when the crow-saint Kaagbhusund was asked by Lord Ram to seek a boon. Kaagbhusund also told the Lord that if he is indeed pleased with him then the only thing that he wants is to have the greatest of affection and devotion for the Lord. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 84 along with Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede it.]

तव माया बस जीव जड़ संतत फिरड़ भुलान ।
तेहि पर क्रोध न करिअ प्रभु कृपा सिंधु भगवान ॥१०८ (ग)॥

tava māyā basa jīva jaṛa santata phira'i bhulāna.
tēhi para krōdha na kari'a prabhu kṛpā sindhu bhagavāna.108 (c).

Influenced by the power of your Maya (delusions), the stupid and gross-minded creature wonders here and there like someone who is disoriented, committing small or big errors unwittingly (as he is deluded and is not even aware that he is doing something wrong).

Oh Lord God who is like an ocean of mercy and compassion (kṛpā sindhu bhagavāna)! Please don't be angry at him (i.e. on my disciple who had not shown respect to me by standing up and bowing before me when I came in, a stupid act of his that has made you curse him so terribly).

[To wit, oh Lord, he is an ordinary and ignorant person, and a utterly stupid person at that, for he who does not know what is right and what is not. He is not someone wise and enlightened from whom one expects good conduct. So please excuse him for his mistake.] (Doha no. 108-c)

संकर दीनदयाल अब एहि पर होहु कृपाल ।
साप अनुग्रह होइ जेहि नाथ थोरेहीं काल ॥ १०८ (घ)॥

saṅkara dīnadayāla aba ēhi para hōhu kṛpāla.
sāpa anugraha hō'i jēhim nātha thōrēhīm kāla. 108 (d).

Oh Lord Shiva who shows mercy on the meek and the humble (saṅkara dīnadayāla)! Now please be gracious enough to show kindness on him so that the curse becomes milder and of a shorter duration, and he is soon he freed from its horrible effects. (Doha no. 108-d)

चौ०. एहि कर होइ परम कल्याना । सोइ करहु अब कृपानिधाना ॥ १ ॥
बिप्रगिरा सुनि परहित सानी । एवमस्तु इति भइ नभबानी ॥ २ ॥
caupāī.

ēhi kara hō'i parama kalyānā. sō'i karahu aba kṛpānidhānā. 1.
bipragirā suni parahita sānī. ēvamastu iti bha'i nabhabānī. 2.

Now please, oh Lord (Shiva) who is an abode of mercy and compassion (kṛpānidhānā), do something that may help ensure his welfare, help him tide over the terrible consequences of your curse and ultimately achieve the stature of supreme blessedness.” (1)

When the Lord heard the plea of the learned Brahmin, a selfless prayer meant for the welfare of an unfortunate person, he was moved and pleased so much so that he spoke again in the form of a heavenly voice, saying, “It shall be so (i.e. your wish for the spiritual welfare of your disciple is hereby granted). (2)

जदपि कीन्ह एहिं दारुन पापा । मैं पुनि दीन्हि कोप करि सापा ॥ ३ ॥
तदपि तुम्हारि साधुता देखी । करिहउँ एहि पर कृपा बिसेषी ॥ ४ ॥

jadapi kīnha ēhiṁ dārūna pāpā. mair̥m puni dīnhi kōpa kari sāpā. 3.
tadapi tumhāri sādhitā dēkhī. kariha'um̐ ēhi para kṛpā bisēṣī. 4.

Though he has committed a grave sin which normally shouldn't be forgiven, and therefore he had invited my wrath. I had become so annoyed with him that I had cursed him in disgust (3).

But observing your piety and saintly nature (that thinks for the welfare of others who are lowly and unfortunate by fate), I shall make an exception for him and bless him in a special way; I shall extend a special favour to him (4).

छमासील जे पर उपकारी । ते द्विज मोहि प्रिय जथा खरारी ॥ ५ ॥
मोर श्राप द्विज व्यर्थ न जाइहि । जन्म सहस अवस्य यह पाइहि ॥ ६ ॥

chamāsīla jē para upakārī. tē dvija mōhi priya jathā kharārī. 5.
mōra śrāpa dvija byārtha na jā'ihī. janma sahāsa avasya yaha pā'ihī. 6.

A exalted Brahmin who has the noble qualities of forgiveness and beneficence is as dear to me as the Lord who holds a bow and arrow in his hands (i.e. Lord Ram—“kharārī”) who is also very dear to my heart. (5)

Oh noble Brahmin! My curse cannot go in vain, and it will be effective inasmuch as he will surely have to take countless births in accordance to that curse. (6)

जनमत मरत दुसह दुख होई । एहि स्वल्पउ नहिं व्यापिहि सोई ॥ ७ ॥
कवनेउँ जन्म मिटिहि नहिं ग्याना । सुनहि सूद्र मम बचन प्रवाना ॥ ८ ॥

janamata marata dusaha dukha hō'ī. ēhi svalpa'u nahim byāpihi sō'ī. 7.
kavanē'um̐ janma miṭihī nahim gyānā. sunahi sūdra mama bacana pravānā. 8.

But though he shall have to take repeated births as mandated by the curse, he will be freed from uncountable torments and sufferings that are associated with the cycle of birth and death, and from which all living beings invariably suffer. He would be indemnified from this part of the curse. (7)

Besides this indemnity, he would also be blessed by the boon of not losing his wisdom and true knowledge through his different births.'

[To wit, though he will have to take numerous births in different forms of creatures in keeping with the mandate of my curse, but I am hereby granting him two boons—one is that he will not have to face the horrors of birth and death as well as the suffering of life in this gross world, and two, he will retain his spiritual wisdom, be self-realised and enlightened through the entire cycle.]

[After expressing his appreciation of the Brahmin and accepting his prayers aimed at the welfare of his disciple, Lord Shiva turned to the latter who stood there trembling in fear. The Lord told him—] 'Oh you Shudra (i.e. a contemptible person of lowly nature and a dumb wit)! Now listen to my words which are true and inviolable. (8)

रघुपति पुरीं जन्म तव भयऊ । पुनि तैं मम सेवाँ मन दयऊ ॥ ९ ॥
पुरी प्रभाव अनुग्रह मोरें । राम भगति उपजिहि उर तोरें ॥ १० ॥

raghupati purīm janma tava bhaya'ū. puni tairṁ mama sēvām̐ mana daya'ū. 9.
purī prabhāva anugraha mōrēm̐. rāma bhagati upajihi ura tōrēm̐. 10.

First of all you were born in the city or capital of Lord Ram (i.e. at Ayodhya)¹, and secondly you have sincerely devoted yourself in serving and worshipping me². (9)

Now therefore, due to the miraculous power and the positive effect of the Lord's city (in which you spent time of your life) as well as for your serving and worshipping me, I am pleased with you, and it is due to my grace that the spiritual virtue of having devotion and affection for Lord Ram would spontaneously spring up in your bosom. (10)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 97.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 105.]

सुनु मम बचन सत्य अब भाई । हरितोषन ब्रत द्विज सेवकाई ॥ ११ ॥
अब जनि करहि बिप्र अपमाना । जानेसु संत अनंत समाना ॥ १२ ॥

sunu mama bacana satya aba bhā'ī. haritōṣana brata dvija sēvakā'ī. 11.
aba jani karahi bipra apamānā. jānēsu santa ananta samānā. 12.

Now listen brother (sunu --- aba bhā'ī)¹ to my words that are true and inviolable. Service to learned and wise Brahmins is the path or means that pleases Lord Hari (Lord Vishnu). (11)

Henceforth, never insult a Brahmin (in your life). Always treat saints and pious people as being equivalent to the eternal and supreme Lord God himself². (12)

[Note—¹When Lord Shiva addresses the Shudra with the word “brother— *bhāī*”, it clearly shows that his anger has subsided and he has forgiven the offender. Earlier the Lord had used words of condemnation for him—such as (a) *hatabhāgya agya abhimānī*, (b) *saṭha*, and (c) *khala* in Chaupai line nos. 1, 3 and 4 that precede Doha no. 107 herein above during this episode.

²Lord Shiva has qualified those Brahmins who deserve respect by saying that they should be ‘saintly’. This is true and it implies that not all Brahmins deserve to be revered like God. Surely no one would be inspired to show any respect to a fallen Brahmin who has gone astray from his noble path, one who does not follow the principles of Dharma like the ones described hereinbefore in this narration when the characters of Kaliyug are being enumerated. Refer to: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Doha no. 98 along with Chaupai line nos. 2-8 that precede it; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 6-7 that precedes Doha no. 99; (iii) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 100; (iv) Chanda line nos. 7-9 that precedes Doha no. 101.]

इंद्र कुलिस मम सूल बिसाला । कालदंड हरि चक्र कराला ॥ १३ ॥
जो इन्ह कर मारा नहिं मरई । बिप्रद्रोह पावक सो जरई ॥ १४ ॥

indra kulisa mama sūla bisālā. kāladaṇḍa hari cakra karālā. 13.
jō inha kara mārā nahīm marāī. bipradrōha pāvaka sō jaraī. 14.

Someone who may not be killed or harmed by any of the four—(i) the strong weapon of Indra (the king of gods), a weapon called Vajra (which is the strongest and an invincible weapon in existence), (ii) my own (Shiva’s) Trident, (iii) the Danda of Kaal (i.e. by the baton of the God of Death), or (iv) by the Chakra of Lord Hari (i.e. the serrated discus used by Lord Vishnu as his infallible weapon) [13]—

—Even he cannot escape the wrath of a Brahmin, for he would be reduced to ash by the fierce fire symbolised by opposition to a Brahmin, or harbouring enmity or hatred for him [14]. (13-14)

अस बिबेक राखेहु मन माहीं । तुम्ह कहँ जग दुर्लभ कछु नाहीं ॥ १५ ॥
औरउ एक आसिषा मोरी । अप्रतिहत गति होइहि तोरी ॥ १६ ॥

asa bibēka rākhēhu mana māhīm. tumha kaham̃ jaga durlabha kachu nāhīm.
15.
aura'u ēka āsiṣā mōrī. apratihata gati hō'ihi tōrī. 16.

Beware of this and keep it in your mind. Then nothing shall be inaccessible or impossible to achieve for you in this world.

[To wit, if you are careful to show respect to your elders who are saintly, wise and learned like the Brahmins I am talking about, and added to this will be my boon that devotion for Lord Ram will sprout in your bosom, then be assured that nothing would be impossible for you to achieve in your life in this world.] (15)

Besides all these (i.e. the boons or favours I have already granted you), I hereby bless you with another special boon in addition to what you are already blessed with—and it is that you will possess such mystical powers that will enable you to attain whatever you wish, you will be able to go wherever you wish and no barriers would hinder you.

[To wit, you shall have a transcendental reach. Despite your being a creature with a gross body, your soul would be empowered to reach transcendental heights and a level of existence where physical barriers of the world do not matter.]” (16)

दो०. सुनि सिव बचन हरषि गुर एवमस्तु इति भाषि ।
मोहि प्रबोधि गयउ गृह संभु चरन उर राखि ॥ १०९ (क) ॥

dōhā.

suni siva bacana haraṣi gura ēvamastu iti bhāṣi.
mōhi prabōdhi gaya'u gṛha sambhu carana ura rākhi. 109 (a).

My Guru was exhilarated when he heard the words of Lord Shiva. He endorsed them by saying ‘So be it’.

After that, he comforted and reassured me and taught me wisdom in many ways. Then enshrining Lord Shiva’s holy feet in his heart, he went home. (Doha no. 109-a)

प्रेरित काल बिंधि गिरि जाइ भयउं मैं ब्याल ।
पुनि प्रयास बिनु सो तनु तजेउं गएँ कछु काल ॥ १०९ (ख) ॥

prērita kāla bindhi giri jā'i bhaya'um' maim byāla.
puni prayāsa binu sō tanu tajē'um' ga'ēm' kachu kāla. 109 (b).

In due course of time and driven by my fate, I became a serpent (according to the curse) and went to live in a place called Vindhyachal. [It is a low mountain range with dense forests. I went there in my next birth as a serpent and lived in the hollow of some tree there.]

After the passage of some time, I discarded that body of a snake without any effort or trouble¹. (Doha no. 109-b)

[Note—¹This refers to the natural process whereby a serpent sheds its external skin called the cuticle without the least effort.]

जोइ तनु धरउं तजउं पुनि अनायास हरिजान ।
जिमि नूतन पट पहिरइ नर परिहरइ पुरान ॥ १०९ (ग) ॥

jō'i tanu dhara'um' taja'um' puni anāyāsa harijāna.
jimi nūtana paṭa pahira'i nara parihara'i purāna. 109 (c).

Oh the servant of Lord Hari (or the mount of Lord Hari—“*harijāna*”; i.e. Garud)! Whatever forms I had to repeatedly assume and then discard at the end of their tenures in this world, I did so effortlessly and without even knowing or being aware of anything.

It was just like a person donning a new set of clothes after discarding the old one¹. (Doha no. 109-c)

[Note—¹To wit, in accordance with the blessings of Lord Shiva that was endorsed by my Guru, I didn't feel the pain of birth and death. Though I had to repeatedly be born as a lowly creature such as a bird or an animal, it was as simple as a person changing clothes. This is because Lord Shiva had blessed me that I will retain spiritual wisdom, and be self-realised and enlightened in all my births. Thus, I could understand that my true 'self' is not the gross physical body that suffered due to old age and died, but it was my 'Atma', my soul, that is pure consciousness and an eternal entity that is independent from the body. This wisdom made me detached from the physical body in which my 'Atma' lived. And when the time came to leave the body of any given birth, I simply migrated to a new home in the next body. I left the old home to live in a new home. This transition was like someone taking off his old and worn-out clothes and wearing new and fresher ones.]

सिवँ राखी श्रुति नीति अरु मैं नहिं पावा १लेस ।

एहि बिधि धरेउँ बिबिधि तनु ग्यान न गयउ खगेस ॥ १०९ (घ) ॥

sivam̐ rākhi śruti nīti aru maim̐ nahim̐ pāvā klēsa.

ēhi bidhi dharē'um̐ bibidhi tanu gyāna na gaya'u khagēsa. 109 (d).

Lord Shiva upheld the sanctity of the auspicious path of righteous conduct as propounded by the Vedas (by punishing me for my transgression of it when I insulted my Guru), and at the same time I did not have to undergo sufferings and torments (that my misdemeanours could have imposed upon me).

In this way, oh King of Birds, I had to assume countless forms in my different births, but fortunately I did not lose my wisdom and enlightenment.

[To wit, I remained steeped in true knowledge and self-realisation as a boon granted by Lord Shiva and endorsed by my Guru. This boon stood me in good stead and helped me to glide over the rough and tumble of countless births and deaths like a bird which glides smoothly in the sky and avoids all the obstacles of land while travelling from one place to another.] (Doha no. 109-d)

चौ०. त्रिजग देव नर जोड़ तनु धरऊँ । तहँ तहँ राम भजन अनुसरऊँ ॥ १ ॥

एक सूल मोहि बिसर न काऊ । गुर कर कोमल सील सुभाऊ ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

trijaga dēva nara jō'i tanu dhara'ūm̐. taham̐ taham̐ rāma bhajana anusara'ūm̐.
1.

ēka sūla mōhi bisara na kā'ū. gura kara kōmala sīla subhā'ū. 2.

In whatever form I took birth—whether as a Trjag (animal and bird), or some form of junior god (i.e. as a demi-god or as a spirit form), or as a human being (with its three genders, male, female and neuter, a wide variety of ethnic divisions, sects, classes and levels of living)—in all my births I managed to remain steady in my worship of Lord Ram and have devotion for the Lord¹. (1)

But there was one thing which kept nagging inside me and pricked my conscience constantly, making me feel ever so remorseful. And it was that I just could not forget the amiable disposition of my Guru; I could not forget his kind, compassionate, merciful and courteous nature². (2)

[Note—¹To wit, by the blessings of Lord Shiva and the grace of my Guru, there was one constant thing that helped me keep myself steady and maintain my balance in my spiritual quest during my journey through all the different wombs in which I had to travel in accordance with the fiat of my fate. And this single stabilising factor was that I kept on worshipping Lord Ram and having devotion for the Lord inspite of all the challenges and adversities, all the miseries and torments that I had to face. This simple method served as a boon for me as it helped me to be happy and blissful throughout my journey. It also helped me by gradually neutralising the evil effects of my misdemeanours and sins as well as the negative consequences of the curse of Lord Shiva, and replacing it with spiritual merit that went on accumulating and quietly lifting me, step-by-step, out of the quagmire of sufferings and miseries to which I had earlier been condemned for ever.

²I felt so sorry and regretful that I had been so irreverent, so thankless and so ungrateful to such an affectionate teacher as my Guru who had been so exceptionally kind-hearted as not to have ever taken any offence at my stupid and vile behaviour when I had repeatedly neglected his advice and did not hesitate to insult him. Instead of punishing me or cursing me, he had always shown love and concern for me even as he tried his best to bring me to my senses. Then when Lord Shiva could not cope with my arrogance and sinful behaviour and had cursed me vehemently, my Guru had interceded on my behalf and persuaded Lord Shiva to forgive me. My Guru's caring nature and his love and concern for me weighed heavily on my conscience all through my journey in various lives.

I felt extremely ashamed of myself and lamented gravely that I did not have even basic sense of courtesy and decency to say 'I am sorry' to him. I always remembered my Guru with the greatest of respect and affection for him, and my heart felt very heavy and full of remorse throughout the different births I took as time passed.]

चरम देह द्विज कै मैं पाई । सुर दुर्लभ पुरान श्रुति गाई ॥ ३ ॥

खेलउँ तहूँ बालकन्ह मीला । करउँ सकल रघुनायक लीला ॥ ४ ॥

carama dēha dvija kai mairṁ pā'ī. sura durlabha purāna śruti gā'ī. 3.

khēla'um' tahūm' bālakanha mīlā. kara'um' sakala raghunāyaka līlā. 4.

By and by, I was fortunate to get the body of a Brahmin¹, a body that is lauded by the Vedas and Purans when they declare that it is rare for even the gods to acquire it. (3)

While I was a child in this birth, I used to mingle with other ordinary children of my age and play with them, but with a difference—and it was that during my plays I used to re-enact the many episodes associated with the life and time of Lord Ram². (4)

[Note—¹Kaagbhusund observed: “I had been worshipping and adoring Lord Ram in all the births that I took during my long journey through this world as I have already mentioned in previous verses. As a natural reward of this wise and auspicious deed of mine, I was slowly elevated to be finally born as a Brahmin during my next birth as a human being. Amongst all the humans, this form, i.e. the body of a Brahmin, is regarded with great esteem as it is the senior-most class of humans in the hierarchy of society so much so that even the gods show their respect to a Brahmin.”

Remember: The importance of Brahmin is obvious from the fact that it was one reason why Lord Shiva had cursed me—I had shown disrespect to a Brahmin.

The superior nature of the human body as compared to all other forms that the soul has to assume during the course of its journey through different wombs in the cycle of birth and death in this world has been emphasised in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 43, and (ii) Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 86.

²To wit, I used to re-enact the many playful activities of the Lord when he was a child like me during his manifestation as a human being. As I grew up, I staged many plays that commemorated many episodes of Lord Ram’s life. Unlike other children who indulged in childish activities that are natural and normal for a human child, and found interest in the things of the world, I loved to spend my time remembering Lord Ram by way of replaying the many incidences of his life as part of my childhood indulgences. In this way, I managed to remember the Lord and exhibited a subtle spiritual trait in me even during my early life as a child when ordinarily it would be expected of me that I would behave more normally like other children of my age who rarely ever think of spiritualism or remember the Lord simply because they aren’t even aware of such things.]

प्रौढ़ भएँ मोहि पिता पढ़ावा । समझउँ सुनउँ गुनउँ नहिं भावा ॥ ५ ॥

मन ते सकल बासना भागी । केवल राम चरन लय लागी ॥ ६ ॥

praur̥ha bha'ēm̐ mōhi pitā paṛhāvā. samajha'um̐ suna'um̐ guna'um̐ nahim̐ bhāvā. 5.

mana tē sakala bāsanā bhāgī. kēvala rāma carana laya lāgī. 6.

When I grew up, my father began teaching me (on secular subjects like all fathers do to prepare their off-springs to face the rough and tumble of the world in the future). I tried to understand whatever was being taught to me, I tried to attentively hear and focus my mind on the lessons being taught, and I tried to reflect and analyse whatever was being taught to me, but I could not bring myself around to find any interest in reading and studying any of these things that my father wanted to teach me. None of

them appealed to my mind or heart, and I found no attraction in the subjects taught.
(5)

All Vasanas (worldly cravings, desires, passions and longings) were gradually erased from my Mana (my inner being; from my mind and heart). On the contrary, I was solely absorbed in the thoughts of Lord Ram and my Mana only remembered the holy feet of the Lord¹. (6)

[Note—¹Kaagbhusund observed further: “My father tried his best to teach me many subjects of the secular world in order to make me qualified and grow up as an educated and learned Brahmin like him so that I would be able to stand on my own two feet and get respect in the society when I became an adult and settled as a householder. But my soul was anchored elsewhere. My heart and mind were rooted in spiritualism and my soul lived in a transcendental world of pure consciousness, as opposed to the existence in the temporal world that ordinary human beings do. Therefore, all efforts of my father fell flat, and I just could not focus my attention on learning worldly subjects.

On the contrary, my mind and heart developed dispassion and detachment from the gross world of sense objects and its countless temptations. I developed deep and enduring love and affection for Lord Ram; my mind and heart were focused on the holy feet of the Lord and I remembered them even while my father was trying to teach me.

The result was I could not focus on my studies, and from the perspective of my unfortunate father I was a hopeless son of a low intellect, one who was fidgety, dull-headed and good for nothing. I am so sorry that I had disappointed him; I am so sorry that he may have felt remorseful, dejected and depressed because of me.”

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 8-10 that precedes Doha no. 109 where Lord Shiva has blessed Kaagbhusund that he would have steady and abiding spiritual knowledge and wisdom as well as devotion and affection for Lord Ram in whatever birth he takes.

The human body is a blessing that the Atma or the soul of a living being gets for its meritorious deeds and auspicious way of life. One would be wise if one does not misuse this body by taking liberty and allowing oneself to get entangled in the web of worldly delusions and temptations. This human body is like a two-edged sword—on the one hand it can be used by the creature to free him from the endless cycle of birth and death and achieve final liberation from this tangle, and on the other hand if this body is mishandled then it can land the creature in a situation where it is pushed back into the lower end of the cycle of birth and death from which he has risen after having to suffer immensely through countless rounds of torturous wonderings in different births.

The objective of the human body is not to get tempted by the illusionary charms of the gross world and its equally gross attractions that tend to pull down the soul of the creature and dunk it in the bottomless cesspool of spiritual miseries and torments. On the contrary, the human body should be used to attain spiritual purity, piety and holiness that provides the creature abiding peace and happiness as well as an opportunity to find liberation and deliverance from the world of transmigration. The human body should be the tool to attain emancipation and salvation of the soul instead of forcing the soul to get bogged down and get enmeshed in the web of sufferings and grief by getting tempted by the delusions that are created by the sense objects of this material world.

The next important point is that there are two established paths that help the creature in his birth as a human being to achieve his spiritual objectives of attaining liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation. One of the two paths is the metaphysical path of “Gyan”, or the path of self-realisation, of acquiring truthful knowledge of the self, spiritual wisdom and enlightenment. This is achieved by a plethora of means as advised in the Upanishads and other scriptures. The other path is “Bhakti”, the path of having undiluted devotion and true affection for Lord God, the path of total submission to Lord God. This second path of Bhakti is simple and easy to implement as it needs no special efforts or skills to attain success.

Further, the path of Bhakti has been endorsed by Lord Ram himself. Hence, Kaagbhusund was wise to choose this path over the other path of Gyan as is clear in the present verses.

The importance of the human body and its role in the spiritual welfare of the creature, as well as the important role that Bhakti plays in the fulfillment of the spiritual needs of the creature have been explicitly stressed in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 43—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 44.]

कहु खगेस अस कवन अभागी । खरी सेव सुरधेनुहि त्यागी ॥ ७ ॥
प्रेम मगन मोहि कछु न सोहाई । हारेउ पिता पढ़ाई पढ़ाई ॥ ८ ॥

kahu khagēsa asa kavana abhāgī. khārī sēva suradhēnuhi tyāgī. 7.
prēma magana mōhi kachu na sōhāī. hārē'u pitā paṛhā'i paṛhā'i. 8.

Oh the King of Birds (khagēsa)! Say, who would be so foolish to abandon a all wish-fulfilling cow called Kaamdhenū and instead serve a worthless she-donkey¹? (7)

Since I was always overwhelmed by the thoughts of Lord Ram and remained submerged in his loving memory, nothing else charmed me and I felt no attraction for anything pertaining to this world (as my father expected me to have). [To wit, from all practical purposes, I appeared to be disoriented as if I was day-dreaming and lacking in attention.]

My father got fed-up trying to teach me in different ways. [He tried all the tricks that he could think of, and he tried all means of persuasion that he could imagine to make me focus on my studies, but since I lacked interest in this world and its mundane affairs, his teachings made me bored and I paid no attention to them. He was patient like my Guru in my early life, but as time passed he realised that I was a lost case. So he gave up trying to teach me.] (8)

[Note—¹Here, having devotion for Lord Ram and worshipping the Lord is likened to the all wish-fulfilling holy cow known as Kaamdhenū; and preparing oneself to serve the interest of the world is like the service rendered unto the she-donkey.

Kaagbhusund means that he would have been foolish to spend his time in learning those subjects that would have prepared him to do service of the world when he grew up to become an adult and a householder like his father wanted him to do. He says that it was his conscious and well thought decision to leave this path, and instead take up the path that would lead him to his spiritual welfare by developing devotion, love and faith in Lord Ram.

This service rendered to Lord Ram would help him get whatever rewards that he wished to have, and there is no better thing than having lasting happiness, joy, peace, contentedness and bliss in one's life. On the other hand, being of service to the gross and selfish world would have embroiled him a constant cycle of miseries, grief, torments and sorrows.]

भए कालबस जब पितु माता । मैं बन गयउँ भजन जनत्राता ॥ ९ ॥
जहँ जहँ बिपिन मुनीस्वर पावउँ । आश्रम जाइ जाइ सिरु नावउँ ॥ १० ॥

bha'ē kālabasa jaba pitu mātā. mair̥m bana gaya'um̐ bhajana janatrātā. 9.
jaham̐ jaham̐ bipina munīśvara pāva'um̐. āśrama jā'i jā'i siru nāva'um̐. 10.

When my parents died in due course of time, I (withdrew myself from the world and household affairs, and) went to the forest to worship and offer my services to the Lord who is a protector of his devotees and eliminates their sorrows and torments (“janatrātā”—i.e. Lord Ram).

[Since I had no interest in the world and household affairs, I renounced everything after my parents' death and headed to the forest to become a monk or an ascetic to spend the rest of my life worshipping Lord Ram and doing service to him in whatever humble way I could do.] (9)

During my wanderings through the forest, whenever I found hermitages of sages and seers I would go there and pay my obeisance to them by bowing my head before them in reverence. (10)

बूझउँ तिन्हहि राम गुन गाहा । कहहिं सुनउँ हरषित खगनाहा ॥ ११ ॥
सुनत फिरउँ हरि गुन अनुबादा । अब्याहत गति संभु प्रसादा ॥ १२ ॥

būjha'um̐ tin̐hahi rāma guna gāhā. kahahir̥m suna'um̐ haraṣita khaganāhā. 11.
sunata phira'um̐ hari guna anubādā. abyāhata gati sambhu prasādā. 12.

Oh the King of Birds (khaganāhā)! I used to request them to recount for me the many wonderful stories associated with Lord Ram and his eclectic glories and divine deeds. They delightfully used to narrate them to me, and I used to hear them with joy and exhilaration. (11)

In this way I always used to roam about hearing the glories, the virtues and the many stories describing the holiness and divinity of Lord Hari (being recited at the different hermitages of sages and seers).

By Lord Shiva's grace, I could go unhindered and unchecked to any place that I wished to visit (and I was always welcomed wherever I went)¹. (12)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 16 that precedes Doha no. 109.]

छूटी त्रिबिधि ईषना गाढ़ी । एक लालसा उर अति बाढ़ी ॥ १३ ॥
 राम चरन बारिज जब देखौं । तब निज जन्म सफल करि लेखौं ॥ १४ ॥

chūṭī tribidhi īṣanā gāṛhī. ēka lālasā ura ati bāṛhī. 13.

rāma carana bārija jaba dēkhaum̐. taba nija janma saphala kari lēkhaum̐. 14.

All the three types of longings that are usually firmly entrenched in a person's mind and heart in his life (such as desire to have a worthy son, desire for wealth, and desire for fame and good name) had already left me very early in my life (or I had myself voluntarily left them)¹.

The only desire that lasted inside me and grew in intensity as time passed [13] --- was to someday have a divine glimpse of the holy feet of Lord Ram as this was the only way I would regard my life as being fulfilled and myself as being accomplished [14]. (13-14)

[Note—¹Refer: Chaupai line no. 6 hereinbefore.]

जेहि पूँछउँ सोइ मुनि अस कहई । ईस्वर सर्व भूतमय अहई ॥ १५ ॥
 निर्गुन मत नहिं मोहि सोहाई । सगुन ब्रह्म रति उर अधिकाई ॥ १६ ॥

jēhi pūṁcha'um̐ sō'i muni asa kahaī. īsvara sarba bhūtamaya ahaī. 15.

nirguna mata nahim̐ mōhi sōhāī. saguna brahma rati ura adhikāī. 16.

Every sage or seer from whom I asked this question (i.e. every wise and enlightened person to whom I expressed my desire to learn how to have a divine vision of Lord Ram and his holy feet) told me that the Supreme Being, the Lord God (īsvara), is all pervading and omnipresent, and reveals himself in the form of all living beings¹. (15)

But this 'Nirguna form' of the Lord did not appeal to me. My heart was longing for the 'Saguna form' of the Lord (i.e. a form that is easily accessible, that is easily understandable even by a common man, that can be known and visualised and worshipped and adored like the physical form of Lord Ram, though the Lord's actual and primary form was the cosmic form of the 'Ishwar' that is invisible and all-pervading)². (16)

[Note—¹This view of course is true, and it is the standard and the universally accepted principle of metaphysics as enunciated in the Upanishads. It primarily says that the 'Ishwar' is a name given to the cosmic Consciousness, and the same Consciousness lives inside all living beings as their Atma or soul. To wit, a living being is simply a microcosmic form of Ishwar, for the latter is the macrocosmic form of pure Consciousness. This cosmic and all-pervading form of the Lord God is called the "Nirguna form" as it is invisible, beyond perception, spread uniformly throughout this creation, and not limited to any specific characters or qualities that can be measured or known.

²The "Nirguna form" of the Lord is preferred by wise and learned sages, but the more accessible form known as "Saguna form" is the preference of devotees because it is

easy to relate to in a visible world where things that are seen and felt are more relevant to a creature in his day-to-day life. The Saguna form of the Lord helps a person in his worship and offering of service to Lord God as it is easy to visualise and have access to. Even an ordinary person who has to carry out his worldly responsibilities with little time that he can spare for learning the scriptures, one who is not too well equipped mentally to understand the esoteric philosophy of metaphysics, theology and spiritualism, one who does not have the intellectual reach to comprehend mystical matters related to the spirit and its destiny, subjects that are so mysterious and complicated for him that he would rather avoid them—such ordinary souls find it easy to offer worship and have devotion for an entity that they can see and hear about, i.e. the “Saguna form of the Lord”, as compared to an entity that is invisible, is beyond comprehension and therefore seems to be very abstract for him, i.e. the “Nirguna form of the same Lord”.

There is principally no difference between the two aspects of Brahm, the Supreme Being, known as “Nirguna” and “Saguna” forms. Simply put, the ‘Saguna form’ is the embodied form of Brahm that has attributes, while the ‘Nirguna form’ is the disembodied or ethereal form of Brahm that has no specific attributes. They are the two sides of the same coin. An individual chooses a form that suits his own intellectual abilities, temperament and likings in order to attain his spiritual goal in life.

In the context of the two forms of the Lord God known as “Nirguna form” and “Saguna form”, refer to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 23; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 116.]

दो०. गुर के बचन सुरति करि राम चरन मनु लाग ।

रघुपति जस गावत फिरउँ छन छन नव अनुराग ॥ ११० (क) ॥

dōhā.

gura kē bacana surati kari rāma carana manu lāga.

raghupati jasa gāvata phira'um^३ chana chana nava anurāga. 110 (a).

I remembered the words of my revered Guru (of my previous life), and therefore my Mana (mind and heart) were rooted in having affection and devotion for the holy feet of Lord Ram (as advised by him)¹.

So I roamed about ecstatically singing and praising the wonderful glories and divine stories of Lord Ram with devotion and love for the Lord getting enhanced in me every moment of my life as time passed. (Doha no. 110-a)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 106, and Doha no. 109-a. The Guru had advised Kaagbhusund during his previous life that the reward for worshipping Shiva is to have devotion for Lord Ram, and when Lord Shiva himself blessed Kaagbhusund that he would have eternal devotion for Lord Ram, his Guru felt very happy and endorsed this boon.

Now in the present life of a Brahmin, Kaagbhusund fondly remembered that earlier time and decided to follow his Guru's instructions.]

मेरु सिखर बट छायाँ मुनि लोमस आसीन ।

देखि चरन सिरु नायउँ बचन कहेउँ अति दीन ॥ ११० (ख) ॥

mēru sikhara baṭa chāyām̐ muni lōmasa āsīna.
dēkhi carana siru nāya'um̐ bacana kahē'um̐ ati dīna. 110 (b).

[Roaming like a carefree friar and merrily singing the glories of Lord Ram—] I once reached the summit of a mountain known as Meru where I saw a great sage named Lomas sitting in a meditative posture under the shade of a banyan tree.

Seeing him, I bowed my head most reverentially at his feet and paid my obeisance to him in very polite and humble words. (Doha no. 110-b)

सुनि मम बचन बिनीत मृदु मुनि कृपाल खगराज ।
मोहि सादर पूँछत भए द्विज आयहु केहि काज ॥ ११० (ग) ॥

suni mama bacana binīta mṛdu muni kṛpāla khagarāja.
mōhi sādara pūm̐chata bha'e dvija āyahu kēhi kāja. 110 (c).

Oh the King of Birds (khagarāja)! When the most merciful sage heard my polite and humble words showing respect to him, he reciprocated my gesture by being equally polite to me and asked me affectionately, “Oh Brahmin! What is the work for which you have come here?” (Doha no. 110-c)

तब मैं कहा कृपानिधि तुम्ह सबग्य सुजान ।
सगुन ब्रह्म अवराधन मोहि कहहु भगवान ॥ ११० (घ) ॥

taba maiṁ kahā kṛpānidhi tumha sarbagya sujāna.
saguna brahma avarādhana mōhi kahahu bhagavāna. 110 (d).

Then I said, ‘Oh merciful one (kṛpānidhi)! You are all-knowing and wise. Oh you blessed One (bhagavāna)! Please be kind to enlighten me about the way of worshipping and having devotion for the Saguna (visible) form of Brahm (i.e. a form which I can easily identify and relate to at a personal level; a form that would make it convenient for me to worship and have devotion for the Supreme Being).¹ [(Doha no. 110-d)

[Note—¹The ‘Nirguna form’ of the Supreme Being is too abstract and difficult to focus on as it not visible and has no physical attributes. Though it is the true form of the Supreme Being as he represents cosmic Consciousness which is a sublime and subtle entity that is all-pervading, invisible and without attributes, yet from a practical point of view it is too far away, too abstract and too hypothetical to be easily understood and accessed by a common devotee with an ordinary knowledge, wisdom and intellect. Highly enlightened, disciplined, erudite, sagacious and self-realised ascetics, hermits and sages could meditate and contemplate on this Nirguna form of Brahm successfully, but it is beyond the reach of ordinary souls.

Thus, in order to provide such humble souls the opportunity to derive a spiritual benefit that would be equivalent to that got by great sages and ascetics, the scriptures devised a device in the form of worshipping and having devotion for the ‘Saguna form’ of the same Brahm. Lord Ram is a sterling and a living example of the ‘Saguna form’ of the primarily ‘Nirguna form’ of Brahm, the Supreme Being representing the cosmic Consciousness.]

चौ०. तब मुनीस रघुपति गुन गाथा । कहे कछुक सादर खगनाथा ॥ १ ॥
 ब्रह्मग्यान रत मुनि बिग्यानी । मोहि परम अधिकारी जानी ॥ २ ॥
 लागे करन ब्रह्म उपदेसा । अज अद्वैत अगुन हृदयेसा ॥ ३ ॥

caupāī.

taba munīsa raghupati guna gāthā. kahē kachuka sādara khaganāthā. 1.
 brahmagyāna rata muni bigyānī. mōhi parama adhikārī jānī. 2.
 lāgē karana brahma upadēsā. aja advaita aguna hrdayēsā. 3.

Oh the Lord of Birds (khaganāthā—i.e. Garud)! Then the great sage reverentially narrated some of the divine stories associated with the glories of Lord Ram. (1)

Then that great and learned sage who was well-steeped in the knowledge of Brahm and was most wise and enlightened, thought that I was eligible to be initiated into receiving the metaphysical knowledge pertaining to Brahm (the cosmic form of the Supreme Being that is pure Consciousness). (2)

So he started preaching me about Brahm. He told me that Brahm was without a birth (aja), non-dual (advaita), without attributes (aguna), and the Lord who dwells in the subtle heart of all living beings (hrdayēsā—and as such knows all the thoughts and emotions of a creature even if he does not express them outwardly). (3)

अकल अनीह अनाम अरूपा । अनुभव गज्ज अखंड अनूपा ॥ ४ ॥
 मन गोतीत अमल अबिनासी । निर्बिकार निरवधि सुख रासी ॥ ५ ॥
 सो तैं ताहि तोहि नहिं भेदा । बारि बीचि इव गावहिं बेदा ॥ ६ ॥

akala anīha anāma arūpā. anubhava gamya akhaṇḍa anūpā. 4.
 mana gōtīta amala abināsī. nirbikāra niravadhi sukha rāsī. 5.
 sō taim tāhi tōhi nahim bhēdā. bāri bīci iva gāvahim bēdā. 6.

Brahm is beyond comprehension and reach of the mind (akala), has no desires or wishes (anīha), has no name (anāma) or a form (arūpā). Brahm can only be experienced and known or realised in a subtle way by experiencing his presence everywhere, both inside and outside one’s self (anubhava gamya). He is immutable and indivisible (akhaṇḍa), as well as so unique that there is nothing with which it can be compared or treated as being parallel with (anūpā). (4)

He (Brahm; the Supreme Being) is beyond the reach of the Mana (mind and heart combine) and the perception of the sense organs of a creature (*mana gōtita*). He is immaculate and pure (*amala*), imperishable and indestructible (*abināsi*), without any shortcomings, faults or taints of any kind (*nirbikāra*), limitless, endless and measureless (*niravadhi*), and a fount or treasury of spiritual bliss, joy and happiness (*sukha rāsi*). (5)

The Vedas sing in an unanimous voice or declare and affirm (*gāvahiṃ bēdā*) that there is no difference between an individual soul known as the Jiva (living being) and the Supreme Soul known as Brahm (the Supreme Being) by saying ‘You are him, and he is you; there is no distinction between the two of you’ (*sō tairi tāhi tōhi nahiriṃ bhēdā*) just like the case of there being no difference between water and its currents (*nahiriṃ bhēdā. bāri bīci iva*)¹. (6)

[Note—¹This is the universal spiritual Truth as expounded and espoused in the Upanishads. It is one of the principle Mahavakyas or the great sayings of the Upanishads.

The Mahavakyas are as follows—(i) ‘Brahm Is Consciousness’ (Pragnanam Brahm) appears in Aiteriya Upanishad of the Rig Veda. It means that Atma/consciousness, which gives life to the material layers consisting of the five sheaths of the creature, is the same as the Supreme Reality/Truth behind the entire universe/creation called by the name of Brahm; (ii) ‘That Thou Art’ (Tat Twam Asi) is found in the Chandogya Upanishad of the Sam Veda. It means that the infinite, all-pervading, omniscient Supreme Truth/Reality is the consciousness or pure self in you. It is also called a statement of advice to the seekers in as much as it contains advice addressed to the seeker that the supreme reality is the self within him; (iii) ‘This Self Is Brahm’ (Ayam Atma Brahm) is found in the Mandukya Upanishad in the Atharva Veda. It means that the Atma which is self illuminated and the Supreme Reality/Truth are one and the same (i.e. identical); (iv) I Am Brahm (Aham Brahm Asmi) is found in the Brihadaranyak Upanishad of the Yajur Veda. It proclaims that the conscious principle/element in an individual is nothing other than the total consciousness. This is the statement made by the seeker after attaining self realisation.

There are a number of Upanishads that describe these great sayings, the Mahavakyas, of the Vedas:--

- (i) Rig Veda—Atmabodha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 2, 4; Mudgal Upanishad, Canto 3, verse nos. 1-3.
- (ii) Sam Veda—Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 6, section 16, verse no. 3 (Tattwamasi); Sanyas Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 48; Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse nos. 82-83.
- (iii) Shukla Yajur Veda—Paingal Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 2-5; Canto 4, verse nos. 23-28; Mandal Brahmin Upanishad, Brahman 2, section 2, verse no. 5; Brahman 2, section 4, verse no. 4; Brahman 3, section 1, verse no. 6; Brahman 3, section 2, verse no. 2; Adhyatma Upanishad, verse nos. 2, 10 (So-a-Ham), 30-31 (Tattwamasi); Subal Upanishad, Section/Canto 6, verse nos. 2-7.
- (iv) Krishna Yajur Veda—Shuk-Rahasyo-panishad, verse no. 22; Kaivalya Upanishad, verse nos. 16, 18-19; Sarwasaar Upanishad, verse no. 12-14; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 32, 37; Avadhut Upanishad, verse no. 2 (Tattwamasi); Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 3, verse nos. 60-74; Canto 5, verse no. 5; Panch Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 28 (So-a-ham); Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse no. 34,

78-79; Brahm Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 8; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 131-133..

(v) Atharva Veda—Atma Upanishad, specially verse no. 1-C, 1-D, 1-E, 8, and 22-25; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 7, verse no. 8; Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 5, paragraph no. 15; Canto 6, paragraph no. 22; Canto 8, paragraph nos. 5-6; Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 13-14; Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 2; Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 9; Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 2, 8, 20-21, 57, 65, 74, 95; Mahavakya Upanishad, verse nos. 6-9, 11; Hayagriva Upanishad, verse no. 15; Narad Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 6, paragraph nos. 3-4; Canto 7, verse no. 8; Param Hans Parivrajak Upanishad, paragraph nos. 3-4; Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 20.]

बिबिधि भॉति मोहि मुनि समुझावा । निर्गुन मत मम हृदयं न आवा ॥ ७ ॥
पुनि मैं कहेउँ नाइ पद सीसा । सगुन उपासन कहहु मुनीसा ॥ ८ ॥

bibidhi bhām̐ti mōhi muni samujhāvā. nirguna mata mama hr̥dayam̐ na āvā.
7.

puni maim̐ kahē'um̐ nā'i pada sīsā. saguna upāsana kahahu munīsā. 8.

The sage tried his best to teach me in various ways, but the philosophy that espouses the Nirguna form of Brahm did not appeal to my heart. (7)

So I remained uninterested, and once again bowed my head reverentially at the feet of the sage and said most politely, “Oh Sage, please teach me the Saguna form of worship and devotion of Brahm. (8)

राम भगति जल मम मन मीना । किमि बिलगाइ मुनीस प्रबीना ॥ ९ ॥
सोइ उपदेस कहहु करि दाया । निज नयनन्हि देखौं रघुराया ॥ १० ॥

rāma bhagati jala mama mana mīnā. kimi bilagā'i munīsa prabīnā. 9.
sō'i upadēsa kahahu kari dāyā. nija nayanānhi dēkhaur̐ raghurāyā. 10.

My Mana (mind, heart and soul) is immersed and absorbed in the thoughts of Lord Ram (and I love the Lord and hold him dear to me) just like a fish that wishes to remain immersed in water (and cannot afford to be separated from it even for a moment).

Oh wise sage (munīsā prabīnā)! In this situation, how can it (my Mana) be separated from it (the thoughts of Lord Ram). [To wit, I can't think of anything else but Lord Ram. So please don't try to teach me about Nirguna Brahm as this subject does not interest me at all.] (9)

So therefore, please be kind and gracious enough to teach me that method and show me that way by which I can see Lord Ram with my eyes. [Please tell me how I can have a glimpse of the Saguna form of Lord Ram, the form that is visible to my eyes. I am not interested in the Lord's ethereal, cosmic, all-pervading and invisible form that

defies my imagination and comprehension. I am not mentally capable or emotionally prepared to accept that knowledge.] (10)

भरि लोचन बिलोकि अवधेसा । तब सुनिहउँ निर्गुन उपदेसा ॥ ११ ॥
मुनि पुनि कहि हरिकथा अनूपा । खंडि सगुन मत अगुन निरूपा ॥ १२ ॥

bhari lōcana bilōki avadhēsā. taba suniha'um' nirguna upadēsā. 11.
muni puni kahi harikathā anūpā. khaṇḍi saguna mata aguna nirūpā. 12.

First let me fill my eyes with a divine sight of the Lord of Ayodhya (i.e. Lord Sri Ram) and let me feel fully contented by this view. After that I would listen to your teaching about the Nirguna form of the Lord.” (11)

The sage repeated his earlier approach (stance or method) of first narrating some of the divine stories associated with the Saguna form of Lord Ram, and then he argued against the philosophy of worshipping the Saguna (embodied) form of the Lord that espouses that the Holy Spirit also exists in an embodied form even as it exists in its ethereal and cosmic form. The sage once again emphasised on the importance and the supremacy of the Nirguna (ethereal and disembodied) form of the Lord and the ways to attain it. (12)

तब मैं निर्गुन मत कर दूरी । सगुन निरूपउँ करि हठ भूरी ॥ १३ ॥
उत्तर प्रतिउत्तर मैं कीन्हा । मुनि तन भए क्रोध के चीन्हा ॥ १४ ॥

taba maiṁ nirguna mata kara dūrī. saguna nirūpa'um' kari haṭha bhūrī. 13.
uttara prati'uttara maiṁ kīnhā. muni tana bha'ē krōdha kē cīnhā. 14.

When I found that the sage was adamant on teaching me his own version of spirituality and worship of the Supreme Lord that did not appeal to me inspite of me clearly telling him about it, I became dismayed and annoyed. So I retorted by vehemently debunking and denouncing the Nirguna form of worship as espoused by the sage, and instead argued enthusiastically in support of the cause of Saguna form of worship and devotion. (13)

There was a heated argument between the two of us (me and the sage), and the temperature rose to such an extent that there were physical signs (bodily gestures) of resentment arising in the sage, indicating that he was losing his cool and his patience with me, his anger was mounting by the moment, and it appeared that he was on the verge of cursing me. (14)

सुनु प्रभु बहुत अवग्या किएँ । उपज क्रोध ग्यानिन्ह के हिएँ ॥ १५ ॥
अति संघरषन जौं कर कोई । अनल प्रगट चंदन ते होई ॥ १६ ॥

sunu prabhu bahuta avagyā ki'ēm̃. upaja krōdha gyāninha kē hi'ēm̃. 15.
ati saṅgharaṣana jaum̃ kara kō'ī. anala pragaṭa candana tē hō'ī. 16.

Oh the revered One (“prabhu”—i.e. Garud)! Listen. Irreverence, insolence, rudeness and disgraceful behaviour ignites (or stokes) resentment and anger in the heart of even the wisest and the most learned of persons. (15)

Even if sandalwood (which is inherently deemed to be cool and soothing) is subjected to vigorous friction and hard rubbing, fire will spring out it¹. (16)

[Note—¹My impertinent and irreverent behaviour, my insistence on being initiated to the Saguna form of Bhakti as opposed to what sage Lomus was trying to teach me, and the accompanying heated exchange of words that were exchanged between the two of us amounted to insulting the learned sage Lomus and undermining his wisdom and authority made him so much peeved and annoyed that he soon lost his cool, just like the case of fire being ignited by vigorously rubbing two pieces of sandalwood against each other. I should have shown more discretion and kept to myself even if the sage's doctrines and advice did not appeal to me. I ought to have quietly left the place and go my way if I did not agree with him. Instead of showing basic common sense, I indulged in getting myself embroiled in a heated exchange of words with the illustrious sage. Naturally the sage became wrathful when he found that someone who had come to him to seek some knowledge was trying to undermine his authority and dignity by arguing with him, and discrediting his wisdom and advice.

We note here that Kaagbhusund had shown the same sort of stubbornness and headstrong nature earlier also in his previous life when he had refused to give heed to his Guru and had shown disrespect to the latter which resulted in Lord Shiva cursing him. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 105—to Doha no. 109.]

दो०. बारंबार सकोप मुनि करइ निरूपन ग्यान ।

मैं अपने मन बैठ तब करउँ बिबिधि अनुमान ॥ १११ (क) ॥

dōhā.

bārambāra sakōpa muni kara'i nirūpana gyāna.

maiṁ apanēm̃ mana baiṭha taba kara'um̃ bibidhi anumāna. 111 (a).

The sage was overcome with anger and passion as he repeatedly espoused the cause of knowledge pertaining to the Nirguna form of worship and meditation.

Meanwhile, since this line of spiritual wisdom did not appeal to me, I felt distracted and I sat there brooding.

Since I was disinterested in whatever the sage said, my mind began to wander elsewhere and I started thinking of so many other things (as described herein below in the verses that follow). (Doha no. 111-a)

क्रोध कि द्वैतबुद्धि बिनु द्वैत कि बिनु अग्यान ।

मायाबस परिछिन्न जड़ जीव कि ईस समान ॥ १११ (ख) ॥

krōdha ki dvaitabud'dhi binu dvaita ki binu agyāna.
māyābasa parichinna jaṛa jīva ki īsa samāna. 111 (b).

Observing the sage's behaviour I began to wonder how one can have anger without having a sense of duality, and how can there be no ignorance in the presence of duality¹.

[Kaagbhusund also wondered about the validity of the Nirguna form of worship. He thought to himself—] A Jiva (living being) who has an individual personality and is invariably under the influence of Maya (delusions)—how can such a Jiva be equivalent to Brahm, the Supreme Being (as espoused by the philosophy of non-duality)²? (Doha no. 111-b)

[Note—¹The sage's behaviour seemed incompatible with his espoused philosophy of Nirguna which pertains to the metaphysical philosophy of non-duality or 'Advaitya'. According to this philosophy there is no distinction between the visible and the invisible form of Brahm who represents the pure Consciousness. The two forms of Consciousness, i.e. the visible form that has specific virtues and characters and the invisible form that has no specific attributes, are one and the same, and the difference is merely superficial and because of the different level of understanding of different individuals. The instance of there being no fundamental difference between 'water' and its 'currents' is already cited herein above.

The reason is very obvious and simple: the current formed in a river consists of flowing water; if there is no water flowing in the river there is no question of there being any current in it. A dry river does not have any currents in it.

This being the case, there was no reason why the learned sage Lomus should get angry at Kaagbhusund for favouring the Saguna form of Brahm instead of the Nirguna form as desired by the sage. In the first place, the sage himself should have dealt with the subject dispassionately and equitably. He should have been more discreet and ought to have judiciously treated both the Nirguna form of worship and meditation as well as its counterpart known as the Saguna form by saying that they are both the same, that neither one of them is superior to the other. Favouring one philosophy over the other was equivalent to being ignorant of the reality.

The very fact that sage Lomus is angry because his favouring of the philosophy of Nirguna form of worship of Brahm is being challenged by Kaagbhusund shows that the sage did not have self-restraint, was egoist and haughty as he thought that he knew the best though he had no deep knowledge of metaphysical principles and is not as enlightened, wise and self-realised as he pretends to be.

By distinguishing between Nirguna and Saguna forms of worship of the Lord, the sage has proved that he is ignorant about the reality of Brahm.

Therefore Kaagbhusund wondered how this sage deserves the respect he expects from him; how can he show honour to someone who has not even been able to control his passions and emotions as is evident by the sage getting angry at him. 'Anger' and becoming 'passionate about anything' are definitely not good traits by any count, and it is certainly not expected from a learned sage to have them. Thus, Kaagbhusund lost interest in learning anything from someone who himself does not know the subject thoroughly and deeply.

²More doubts overwhelmed the poor Kaagbhusund as he sat there debating the issue in his mind and heart. He pondered over the philosophy of non-duality which affirms

that there is no difference between Brahm (the Supreme Being) and the Jiva (the ordinary living being), and this argument did not seem to hold true to him. The Jiva and Brahm have so many differences and diverse nature that they do not seem to be compatible with each other, there seems to be no convergence between the two. For instance, Jiva is under the influence of Maya whereas Brahm is free from Maya. This is just one of the obvious differences. Other very apparent differences are that the Jiva takes a birth and dies whereas Brahm is eternal; Jiva suffers and undergoes pains whereas Brahm is free from grief and miseries; Jiva has a gross physical body whereas Brahm has no form; and the list goes on and on.

To Kaagbhusund's innocent, simple and un-initiated mind it was absurd to say that Jiva and Brahm are one. The fact is that they are indeed 'one' and not separate from one another—and the reason for this non-duality is that the true identity of the Jiva, the 'Principal Jiva', is not his gross body but his 'Atma' or soul which is 'pure consciousness' and an ethereal entity, and this Atma is the same as the 'Parmatma' or the 'Supreme Atma' which is 'cosmic Consciousness' known as Brahm. Hence, for a wise, enlightened and truly learned man there is no real difference between the Jiva and Brahm. Whatever differences that do appear are superficial and caused by faulty perception and distorted understanding.]

चौ०. कबहुँ कि दुख सब कर हित ताकें । तेहि कि दरिद्र परस मनि जाकें ॥ १ ॥

परद्रोही की होहि निसंका । कामी पुनि कि रहहि अकलंका ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

kabahuṁ ki dukha saba kara hita tākēṁ. tēhi ki daridra parasa mani jākēṁ. 1. paradrōhī kī hōhiṁ nisaṅkā. kāmī puni ki rahahiṁ akalaṅkā. 2.

{Kaagbhusund's mind kept wondering and pondering over a wide range of subjects. A reading of these verses would highlight some of the fundamental principles that one should keep in mind to live a happier and fruitful life. They guide the reader as how to act wisely and be practical in one's day-to-day interaction with the world.}

Can there ever be sorrows and sufferings for a person who does good of all and selflessly does things that are for the welfare of others?

[To wit, such a person would generate so much goodwill with people that everyone would be willing to help him in times of his need. So he never has to suffer problems associated with the world and its people.]

Can anyone suffer from poverty and wants if that person possesses a gem called Parasmani (the philosopher's stone)? [The "parasa mani" is able to turn base metals into gold. So a person who has this rare gem can never suffer from poverty.] (1)

Can a person who keeps enmity with others and has a malevolent nature ever feel fearless; can he live a happy life free from mental anxiety? [To wit, such a person would be surrounded by enemies, and not friends. He would never be sure when he would be attacked or betrayed by others.]

Can a person who is overcome with Kaam (lust, passion and desires) ever remain free from taints and infamy? [To wit, a person who cannot control his sensual

urges is bound to do something nasty that would bring a lot of shame and ignominy to him.]

बंस कि रह द्विज अनहित कीन्हें । कर्म कि होहिं स्वरूपहि चीन्हें ॥ ३ ॥
काहू सुमति कि खल सँग जामी । सुभ गति पाव कि परत्रिय गामी ॥ ४ ॥

bansa ki raha dvija anahita kīnhēm. karma ki hōhiṁ svarūpahi cīnhēm. 3.
kāhū sumati ki khala saṁga jāmi. subha gati pāva ki paratriya gāmi. 4.

Can anyone's descendents (i.e. one's clan and family) survive by persecuting and harming the Brahmins¹? [The Brahmins are the elderly and learned class of people in the society. They deserve respect just like one would respect one's teacher, parents and elders of the family. A society in which elders are shown disrespect and not taken proper care of would disintegrate sooner or later. Its members go out of control and become undisciplined. So the future is doomed for them.]

If one realises or becomes aware of one's true identity, would he ever indulge in worldly activities of a gross nature and allow himself to get entangled in the web of attachments and expectations of rewards for deeds done in this material world? [When one becomes self-realised one knows that his true 'self' is his Atma or soul which is pure consciousness and separate from his physical body. It is the body that does any deed in this world; it is the body that enjoys or suffers as a result of these deeds. If a person becomes wise and enlightened enough to realise that his true self is the Atma then he would remain indifferent to what the body does in this world; he would remain unaffected by either the good effects or the bad effects of such deeds. Neither would the attraction of rewards make him doing anything, nor would the fear of sufferings prevent him from doing his assigned duties. He develops a sense of equanimity, detachment and dispassion towards the deeds that are done by his 'body', which however is not his 'true self', though the external world thinks that these deeds are done by 'him'.] (3)

Can anyone develop wisdom, good thinking and noble characters if one keeps the company of wild, vile, wicked and unscrupulous people? [The adage that one is known by the company one keeps is proved here. A person is certainly and surely affected by the environment in which he lives. If one keeps bad company, one would become bad himself.]

Can an adulterous person who eyes the women of others ever expect to have a happy fate for himself? [Obviously he would be caught and doomed forever. Adultery, lasciviousness and promiscuity are one of the most contemptible qualities one can ever have.] (4)

[Note—¹In this context, refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 3, 5 that precede Doha no. 165; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 5, 8 that precede Doha no. 166; (iii) Doha no. 174; (iv) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 175; (b) Ayodhya Kand, (v) Chaupai line nos 3-4 that precede Doha no. 126; (c) Kishkindha Kand, (vi) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 17.]

भव कि परहिं परमात्मा बिंदक । सुखी कि होहिं कबहुं हरनिंदक ॥ ५ ॥
 राजु कि रहइ नीति बिनु जानें । अघ कि रहहिं हरिचरित बखानें ॥ ६ ॥

bhava ki parahim paramātmā bindaka. sukhī ki hōhim kabahum̃ harinindaka.

5.

rāju ki raha'i nīti binu jānēm. agha ki rahahim haricarita bakhānēm. 6.

Can someone who is aware of the existence of the Parmatma (the Supreme Atma; the Brahm) ever fall in the grip of the cycle of birth and death?

[To wit, wise and enlightened souls who have realised the ultimate Truth of existence, those who have experienced the profound sense of bliss and blessedness which comes when they have realised the existence of Brahm, or have become 'Brahm-realised', would never find any charm in this world. So they would become detached from it; all their desires pertaining to this gross material world of cease. As a result, when they die, or when their Atma leaves their gross physical body, they would not desire to come back to this world to enjoy it because they know that this enjoyment is false and it is accompanied by countless sufferings. On the contrary, they but would rather wish to become one with Brahm so that they can find an eternal source of happiness, bliss and peace. This means that Brahm-realised souls do not enter into the cycle of birth and death.]

In the same vein, can a person who criticises Lord Hari, who represents one of the many cosmic forms of Brahm, the Parmatma and the Supreme Being, ever expect to be happy and contented? [Kaagbhusund had made this same mistake in his early life for which he had ultimately to suffer the wrath of Lord Shiva. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 105—to Doha no. 109.] (5)

Can a kingdom survive if its king does not know the various laws of good governance, the laws of probity and propriety, the laws of polity and public affairs, and other such laws and principles that a king ought to know? [The kingdom would be ruined and its subjects suffer if the king does not follow the principles of good governance. A similar idea is expressed when Kaagbhusund describes the characters of Kaliyug in Uttar Kand, Chanda line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 101.]

Can sins and their ill effects survive if one narrates the sacred stories associated with Lord Hari that extol the Lord's holy nature and divinity. [This is why true saints and holy souls constantly sing and hear the divine stories of Lord Ram. The sub-conscious mind is very sensitive and receptive, and it is directly affected by whatever a person does or thinks during his waking phase of life. His actions and thoughts during his conscious life affects his inner self in a very definite but imperceptible manner. This is an extension of the principle of one becoming the same as the company one keeps. If an individual allows himself to hear rubbish things, his sub-conscious mind would pick up that rubble and mould his character negatively. On the other hand, if he hears noble things then his sub-conscious mind would subtly influence his inner-self to become noble by nature. Thus, when one sings and hears things that are spiritual by nature, he too becomes spiritually inclined. To wit, by narrating and hearing the stories of Lord Hari a person is able to fill his mind with good thoughts and his heart with good emotions such as that of devotion and affection for the Lord. By and by, the tainting effects of sins and vices would gradually be replaced with auspicious virtues.] (6)

पावन जस कि पुन्य बिनु होई । बिनु अघ अजस कि पावइ कोई ॥ ७ ॥
लाभु कि किछु हरि भगति समाना । जेहि गावहिं श्रुति संत पुराना ॥ ८ ॥

pāvana jasa ki pun'ya binu hō'ī. binu agha ajasa ki pāva'i kō'ī. 7.
lābhu ki kichu hari bhagati samānā. jēhi gāvahiṁ śruti santa purānā. 8.

Is it ever possible to get good fame without doing any meritorious deeds? [To wit, if a person does good deeds and takes noble actions, then his fame would spread even without his wanting to do so. Good name and acclaim would come to him voluntarily.]

In a similar way, can one get infamy and bad name without doing anything evil, wrong, unscrupulous and unrighteous? [If one is careful in all his actions and ensures that he does not do anything that is not right, surely ill-fame and ignominy would not come to him. This principle is an extension of what has been said in the first part of this verse—about one getting good fame by doing meritorious deeds.] (7)

Is there any other worthy gain comparable to having Bhakti (devotion, faith and affection) for Lord Hari, a virtue the glory and importance of which has been lauded and extolled by the Vedas, the Saints and the Purans¹. (8)

[Note—¹To wit, there is no other better spiritual deed than to have devotion, faith and affection for Lord God. The glories and importance of “Bhakti” have been described in numerous places in Ram Charit Manas. Even Lord Ram has himself affirmed its importance and espoused its usefulness for the spiritual welfare of a creature.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 45 where Lord Ram has taught the citizens of Ayodhya about the importance of Bhakti; (b) Aranya Kand, (i), from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 35—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 36 where the Lord has told Sabari about Bhakti and its nine forms; and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede Doha no. 43 where the Lord has advised sage Narad about Bhakti.] (8)

हानि कि जग एहि सम किछु भाई । भजिअ न रामहि नर तनु पाई ॥ ९ ॥
अघ कि पिसुनता सम कछु आना । धर्म कि दया सरिस हरिजाना ॥ १० ॥

hāni ki jaga ēhi sama kichu bhā'ī. bhaji'a na rāmahi nara tanu pā'ī. 9.
agha ki pisunatā sama kachu ānā. dharma ki dayā sarisa harijānā. 10.

Oh Brother (bhā'ī)! Is there anything more useless and a greater loss for a person if one does not worship Lord Ram even after getting the body of (i.e. born as) a human being¹? (9)

Is there any other graver misdeed than backbiting? And oh the devotee and mount of Lord Hari (“harijānā”—i.e. Garud), is there any better and meritorious act than showing mercy and compassion? [To wit, these two are the worst and the best act for a creature to do. The worst thing is backbiting, or criticising a person or tattling about

him behind his back when he cannot even defend himself. And the best act for a person is to show understanding, mercy and compassion for his offenders and adversaries.] (10)

[Note—¹The human body is got by the creature's soul after roaming in countless other wombs during the course of its journey through this world. It marks the culmination of a creature's efforts to rise higher and higher in his pursuit to attain the best form of existence for him Atma. The human body is even rare for the gods to acquire, and it is a tool by which a wise person can break free from the cycle of birth and death. At the same time, the human body is also a medium by which the soul can land in grievous trouble if it is not careful to use it judiciously. The best way to employ this body so that it becomes helpful for the creature in his pursuit for deliverance from all sufferings and liberation from the bondage of birth and death is to use it for worshipping and serving Lord Ram.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 43—to Doha no. 44 where Lord Ram has himself endorsed this principle.]

एहि बिधि अमिति जुगुति मन गुनऊँ । मुनि उपदेस न सादर सुनऊँ ॥ ११ ॥
पुनि पुनि सगुन पच्छ मैं रोपा । तब मुनि बोलेउ बचन सकोपा ॥ १२ ॥

ēhi bidhi amiti juguti mana guna'ūṁ. muni upadēsa na sādara suna'ūṁ. 11.
puni puni saguna paccha mairṁ rōpā. taba muni bōlē'u bacana sakōpā. 12.

In this way I engaged my mind in various thoughts and pondered over so many subjects as a result of which I did not pay attention to the teachings of the sage (Lomus). [Since my mind was occupied elsewhere, I sat lost in my own thoughts and did not heed what sage Lomus was trying to teach me.] (11)

I repeatedly stressed on the importance of Saguna form of worship as my preferred spiritual quest. When I persisted adamantly, the sage finally lost his cool, becoming extremely peeved and exasperated at my impertinence. He said angrily --- (12)

मूढ़ परम सिख देउँ न मानसि । उत्तर प्रतिउत्तर बहु आनसि ॥ १३ ॥
सत्य बचन बिस्वास न करही । बायस इव सबही ते डरही ॥ १४ ॥

mūṛha parama sikha dē'umṁ na mānasi. uttara prati'uttara bahu ānasi. 13.
satya bacana bisvāsa na karahī. bāyasa iva sabahī tē ḍarahī. 14.

“Oh you stupid fool (mūṛha)! I am trying to give you the best of spiritual wisdom but still you don't pay attention to it. Instead, you keep on arguing and citing useless logics just to counter me. (13)

You do not believe in true knowledge and following the path of Truth; you have no faith in my sincere advice. Crowing like a lowly crow, you are fidgety and afraid of everything.

[Like a crow that keeps on crowing and hopping continuously from place to place, not keeping sufficiently still to be able to focus on any given task, you too keep on harping on what you think is correct, without listening to what I am trying to teach you. Again, like a crow you keep changing your position by unnecessarily presenting one argument after another in support of what you deem is the correct path, trying to distract me from my line of thought. You are sore affright to face the reality that you are incompetent and ineligible to get initiation from me on the path of spiritualism and Brahm-realisation, so you are trying to deflect me by presenting irrational arguments just for the sake of arguing and counter me. Oh you stupid fellow; don't you realise that you are committing a grave error.] (14)

सठ स्वपच्छ तव हृदयं बिसाला । सपदि होहि पच्छी चंडाला ॥ १५ ॥
लीन्ह श्राप मैं सीस चढ़ाई । नहिं कछु भय न दीनता आई ॥ १६ ॥

saṭha svapaccha tava hr̥dayam̐ bisālā. Sapadi hōhi pacchī caṇḍālā. 15.
linha śrāpa mair̥m sīsa caṛhāī. Nahim̐ kachu bhaya na dīnatā āī. 16.

Oh you wicked and dumb-witted fellow (saṭha)! Your heart is so stubborn that it would accept only that which you think is right (without being open to hear what is said by the other person). It is so inflated with pride that it thinks that what you say is the only correct thing.

Hence, you would soon become a bird which is as wicked as you are. [To wit, you should become a 'crow' because your behaviour resembles this bird.]” (15)

I patiently and gladly accepted this curse of the sage by bowing my head. It caused no fear, worry or depression in me.

[I had already experienced curses. Earlier too I had been cursed by Lord Shiva. But I was sure no harm would come to me this time as now I was taking the side of worshipping and having devotion for Lord Ram as opposed to the previous time when I was opposed to Lord Ram when Lord Shiva had cursed me.

Besides this, I also knew that no harm would come to me as Lord Shiva had already blessed me with an eternal life of happiness and blessedness that comes with having devotion for Lord Ram. Say, how can misery and happiness co-exist? Surely, sage Lomus is not superior to Lord Shiva, and therefore the sage's curse won't be able to neutralise the blessings of Lord Shiva.] (16)

दो०. तुरत भयउँ मैं काग तब पुनि मुनि पद सिरु नाइ ।
सुमिरि राम रघुबंस मनि हरषित चलेउँ उड़ाइ ॥ ११२ (क) ॥

dōhā.

turata bhaya'um̐ mair̥m kāga taba puni muni pada siru nā'i.
sumiri rāma raghubansa mani haraṣita calē'um̐ urā'i. 112 (a).

I became a crow immediately (when the sage cursed me)¹. I then bowed my head at the feet of the sage, and invoking Lord Ram who is the exalted Lord of Raghu line of

kings of Ayodhya, I cheerfully flew away with a delighted heart² (in my new form as a ‘crow’). (Doha no. 112-a)

[Note—¹This is the second time the poor Kaagbhusund has been cursed for his headstrong nature. The previous occasion was when Lord Shiva had cursed him. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 107. The only difference is that on that occasion it was Lord Shiva who had cursed him, and this occasion it is his Guru sage Lomus who has done so.

²Kaagbhusund has steadfastly taken the side of Saguna form of worship. He had insisted and persisted that the visible form of Brahm as Lord Ram appeals to his heart more than the Lord’s cosmic and invisible form as espoused by sage Lomus. Even Lord Shiva worships this Saguna form of Lord Ram, and it is having devotion for this form that Shiva had blessed Kaagbhusund with in his pervious life.

That is why as soon as he turned into a crow he invoked Lord Ram, and seeking the Lord’s blessings he flew away, sure that the Lord would take full care of him and his destiny. That is also why he had no worry or fear in his heart.]

उमा जे राम चरन रत बिगत काम मद क्रोध ।

निज प्रभुमय देखहि जगत केहि सन करहि बिरोध ॥ ११२ (ख) ॥

umā jē rāma carana rata bigata kāma mada krōdha.

nija prabhumaya dēkhahim jagata kēhi sana karahim birōdha. 112 (b).

[Lord Shiva, who has been narrating this story of the conversation between the crow-saint Kaagbhusund and Garud to his consort Uma, said to her by way of explaining why Kaagbhusund did not feel angry at sage Lomus for cursing him just because he wanted the sage to enlighten him about the process of worshipping the Saguna form of the Supreme Being, something that was not so grave as to invite the punishment of being cursed to become a crow—] “Oh Uma; listen. Those who have affection and devotion for the holy feet of Lord Ram, those who are free from the taints of Kaam (passions and desires), Mada (ego and pride) and Krodha (anger, wrath, fury)—such souls see the whole world as a manifestation of their beloved Lord (Sri Ram), they perceive their beloved Lord everywhere and in all forms in this world. This being the case, say then why and how can they have ill-will or animosity with anyone?”¹. (Doha no. 112-b)

[Note—¹Here we see that Lord Shiva has endorsed Kaagbhusund’s views. Lord Shiva felt glad at heart that Kaagbhusund has adhered steadfastly to the spiritual principles he (Shiva) had advised him—viz. that the best reward a creature can ever get for all his spiritual endeavours is to have devotion for Lord Ram.

Another significant point to note is that a devotee of Lord Ram, here symbolised by Kaagbhusund, is put on a high spiritual pedestal as compared to the so-called “Gyanis” represented by sage Lomus. The “Gyani” is a person who is Brahm-realised and self-realised, who possesses great metaphysical knowledge about the true nature of the self and the Atma, about the existence of the pure Consciousness at two levels of existence, viz. the macrocosmic and the microcosmic levels, what is true freedom, and other such matters related to esoteric subjects pertaining to spiritualism

and theology. All these spiritual paths are extremely complex and besotted with difficulties as compared to the simple and straightforward path of devotion for Lord God.]

चौ०. सुनु खगेस नहिं कछु रिषि दूषन । उर प्रेरक रघुबंस बिभूषन ॥ १ ॥
 कृपासिंधु मुनि मति करि भोरी । लीन्ही प्रेम परिच्छा मोरी ॥ २ ॥
 caupāī.

sunu khagēsa nahim kachu riṣi dūṣana. ura prēraka raghubansa bibhūṣana. 1.
 kṛpāsindhu muni mati kari bhōrī. līnhī prēma paricchā mōrī. 2.

{After narrating how and why he became a ‘crow’ by birth, Kaagbhusund continued with his narration as Garud listened attentively. Kaagbhusund told him—}

‘Listen oh the King of Birds (sunu khagēsa)! The sage (Lomus) was not at fault in this episode (of his cursing me). For in all sooth, it is Lord Ram, the most glorious Lord of Raghu’s line of kings, who inspires or prompts the heart of all living beings and motivates them to do and act in the way the Lord wants. (1)

Verily indeed, the most merciful Lord had tested my devotion for him by clouding the mind of the sage and obstructing his power of reasoning.

[That is why the learned sage was stuck on one line of argument, espousing only the cause of Nirguna form of worship, instead being open-minded and accepting my submission that this form of worship did not appeal to me, and therefore he devising a way to explain to me the Saguna form of worship which I was able to understand and ready to follow. Actually, Lord Ram wished to see if I was really steady in my pursuit of Bhakti or devotion for the Lord. So he prompted the Mana, or heart and mind of the sage, to stubbornly advocate that path which was just the opposite of Bhakti.] (2)

मन बच क्रम मोहि निज जन जाना । मुनि मति पुनि फेरी भगवाना ॥ ३ ॥
 रिषि मम महत सीलता देखी । राम चरन बिस्वास बिसेषी ॥ ४ ॥

mana baca krama mōhi nija jana jānā. muni mati puni phērī bhagavānā. 3.
 riṣi mama mahata sīlatā dēkhī. rāma carana bisvāsa bisēṣī. 4.

When the Lord (Sri Ram) had become sure that I had unflinching faith in him and was his ardent devotee and follower by my Mana (mind and heart), my Bachan (spoken words) and my Karma (deeds and actions), the Lord removed the cloud of delusions that had prompted the sage to be wrathful upon me and curse me. Hence, the sage had a sudden change of heart as he realised his error and regretted his actions. (3)

The exalted sage quietly reflected upon my excellent qualities befitting of a great soul (such as being pious and humble, one who lacked ego and pride, one who does not become angry, one who is steadfast on his chosen spiritual path, and so on), as well as my steady affection, love and faith in the holy feet of Lord Ram. (4)

अति बिसमय पुनि पुनि पछिताई । सादर मुनि मोहि लीन्ह बोलाई ॥ ५ ॥
मम परितोष बिबिधि बिधि कीन्हा । हरषित राममंत्र तब दीन्हा ॥ ६ ॥

ati bisamaya puni puni pachitā'ī. sādara muni mōhi līnha bōlā'ī. 5.
mama paritōṣa bibidhi bidhi kīnhā. haraṣita rāmamantra taba dīnhā. 6.

Then the sage was overwhelmed with regret and become remorseful at his own actions that did not behove of a great sage of his stature. So, lamenting repeatedly and gravely at his own behaviour, he immediately called me back¹. (5)

He repeatedly assuaged my feelings and reassured me affectionately. Thence, he delightfully gave me the Mantra of Lord Ram². (6)

[Note—¹The learned sage felt ashamed of himself. He immensely regretted his actions and behaviour. He realised that the way he got angry at me did not suit him at all, and it contrasted sharply with my calmness and lack of anger when he had cursed me. He realised that his action of getting angry at me and cursing me amounted to a great sin as he had cursed a devotee of Lord Ram whose only fault was that he had wished to learn how to worship and have devotion for Lord Ram's Saguna form (i.e. the form that the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm takes in this world) that has been lauded by the scriptures. Even if the devotee did not take offence and forgave him, the Lord however would not tolerate it and is sure to punish the sage if he did not immediately take remedial steps.

So, as soon as the heat of his passions subsided and he realised the gravity of his error, and when I was still not far away, the sage lamented gravely and immediately called me back to console me.

²After expressing his regrets and assuring me that no actual harm would come to me, he fulfilled my wish by telling me how to worship Lord Ram and meditate upon the Lord by using his divine Mantra. By thus initiating me, he became my 'Guru'. He also explained to me why he had become annoyed at my behaviour in the first place, saying that since there was no difference between the Nirguna and Saguna form of the Supreme Being, he was peeved when I tried to override him and insist on the supremacy of the Saguna form of the Lord. It is not good to confront one's teacher and try to prove him wrong.

But I need not worry about my becoming a 'crow' as this was the wish of the Lord. Since the Lord is very merciful towards his devotees, surely this form of a crow is for my own good and it would give me an exalted stature in the hierarchy of saints and sages.

Another very significant point to note here is this: The wise and enlightened sage who had taken the side of the all-pervading, invisible and cosmic form of Brahm known as the 'Nirguna Brahm' that is very esoteric and beyond comprehension, had to surrender at last in favour of an ordinary soul who was taking the side of the embodied form of Brahm known as the 'Saguna Brahm' that is visible, and easy to access and understand.

To wit, the emphasis here is on the importance of Bhakti or devotion for the embodied form of the Supreme Being as a better and easier spiritual path for attaining

liberation and deliverance as compared to the more abstract and esoteric path of Gyan that relies heavily on acquisition of knowledge of the Atma and the Consciousness.]

बालकरूप राम कर ध्याना । कहेउ मोहि मुनि कृपानिधाना ॥ ७ ॥
सुंदर सुखद मोहि अति भावा । सो प्रथमहि मैं तुम्हहि सुनावा ॥ ८ ॥

bālakarūpa rāma kara dhyānā. kahē'u mōhi muni kṛpānidhānā. 7.
sundara sukhada mōhi ati bhāvā. sō prathamahirṁ mairṁ tumhahi sunāvā. 8.

The sage advised me how to meditate upon the 'child form' of Lord Ram. (7)

This advice was well received by me as this form of the Lord was beautiful, and it provided immense joy, happiness and bliss to the beholder. It pleased me greatly and I felt fulfilled. I have already told you (Garud) about it¹. (8)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 75—to Chaupai line no. 10 that precedes Doha no. 77.]

मुनि मोहि कछुक काल तहँ राखा । रामचरितमानस तब भाषा ॥ ९ ॥
सादर मोहि यह कथा सुनाई । पुनि बोले मुनि गिरा सुहाई ॥ १० ॥

muni mōhi kachuka kāla taham' rākhā. rāmacaritamānasa taba bhāṣā. 9.
sādara mōhi yaha kathā sunā'ī. puni bōlē muni girā suhā'ī. 10.

The sage kept me there with him for sometime and narrated the divine, sacred and holy story of Lord Ram, known as 'Ram Charit Manas', to me¹. (9)

After narrating the whole story to me, the sage once again spoke to me most affectionately as follows --- (10)

[Note—¹This is the second time Kaagbhusund has heard this story of the Ram Charit Manas. Earlier he had heard it from Lord Shiva—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 30. Kaagbhusund had heard this story from Lord Shiva in his Spirit form while the Lord was narrating it his consort Parvati, whereas it is in his physical gross form as a crow that he has heard it from sage Lomus now for the second time.]

रामचरित सर गुप्त सुहावा । संभु प्रसाद तात मैं पावा ॥ ११ ॥
तोहि निज भगत राम कर जानी । ताते मैं सब कहेउँ बखानी ॥ १२ ॥

rāmacarita sara gupta suhāvā. sambhu prasāda tāta mairṁ pāvā. 11.
tōhi nija bhagata rāma kara jānī. tāte mairṁ saba kahē'um' bakhānī. 12.

“This divine lake of spiritual nectar (known as Ram Charit Manas) is very pleasant and sweet but difficult to access as it is quite secret and sublime in nature. Dear (tāta), I received it as a grace of Lord Shiva. (11)

Realising that you are a dear devotee of Lord Ram, I decided to narrate the whole of the story to you. (12)

राम भगति जिन्ह कें उर नाहीं । कबहुँ न तात कहिअ तिन्ह पाहीं ॥ १३ ॥
मुनि मोहि बिबिधि भाँति समुझावा । मैं सप्रेम मुनि पद सिरु नावा ॥ १४ ॥

rāma bhagati jinha kēm ura nāhīm. kabahum' na tāta kahi'a tinha pāhīm. 13.
muni mōhi bibidhi bhāmṭi samujhāvā. mairṁ saprēma muni pada siru nāvā. 14.

Those who do not have devotion for Lord Ram in their mind and heart, oh dear (tāta), one should never narrate this sacred story before them (or to them). [The reason is that they will mock at it, ridicule it, and insult it.]” (13)

In this way, the sage explained the things to me in different ways. And then I reverentially bowed my head at his feet. (14)

निज कर कमल परसि मम सीसा । हरषित आसिष दीन्ह मुनीसा ॥ १५ ॥
राम भगति अबिरल उर तोरें । बसिहि सदा प्रसाद अब मोरें ॥ १६ ॥

nija kara kamala parasi mama sīsā. haraṣita āsiṣa dīnha munīsā. 15.
rāma bhagati abirala ura tōrēm. basihi sadā prasāda aba mōrēm. 16.

The exalted sage delightfully put his lotus-like palms on my head as a gesture of affection, and then he blessed me cheerfully (as he felt very contented and happy). (15)

He said, “By my blessing, profound devotion for Lord Ram will henceforth be firmly established in your heart for all times to come¹.” (16)

[Note—¹This is the second time that Kaagbhusund is being blessed in this way. The first time was when Lord Shiva as well as his previous Guru had done so in his earlier life. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 109 along with Chaupai line nos. 10-16 that precede it.]

दो०. सदा राम प्रिय होहु तुम्ह सुभ गुन भवन अमान ।
कामरूप इच्छामरन ग्यान बिराग निधान ॥ ११३ (क) ॥
dōhā.

sadā rāma priya hōhu tumha subha guna bhavana amāna.
kāmarūpa icchāmarana gyāna birāga nidhāna. 113 (a).

[Sage Lomus blessed Kaagbhsund as follows—] “You will always be loved by Lord Ram and be dear to him (sadā rāma priya hōhu tumha). You will be an embodiment of all the greatest of auspicious virtues that ensure a creature’s all round welfare (subha guna bhavana). You shall be free from the negative trait of pride, haughtiness and ego (amāna).

You would be able to assume whatever form that you wish (kāmarūpa). Your death will be as per your wish (i.e. you will be able to leave your physical body to assume an ethereal form as and when you wish to do so; death would not come to you without your wish—“icchāmarana”). And you would be a treasury of Gyan (truthful knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment), and Vairagya (the virtues of renunciation, dispassion and detachment from the world and the charms of its sense objects (gyāna birāga nidhāna). (Doha no. 113-a)

जेहिं आश्रम तुम्ह बसब पुनि सुमिरत श्रीभगवंत ।
ब्यापिहि तहँ न अबिद्या जोजन एक प्रजंत ॥ ११३ (ख) ॥

jēhim āśrama tumha basaba puni sumirata śrībhagavanta.
byāpihi taham̐ na abidyā jōjana ēka prajanta. 113 (b).

Besides the above blessings, I further bless you that the hermitage in which you dwell with your mind and thought focused eternally on the Lord God (here meaning Lord Ram), no sort of ignorance and delusions would ever be able to cast their dark shadow over that place for a radius of one Yojan (roughly eight miles) around it.

[To wit, it would be protected place where you will be free to pursue your spiritual way of life without any interference from the any of the ill effects of life that are inherent in the gross mortal world.] (Doha no. 113-b)

चौ०. काल कर्म गुण दोष सुभाऊ । कछु दुख तुम्हहि न ब्यापिहि काऊ ॥ १ ॥
राम रहस्य ललित बिधि नाना । गुप्त प्रगट इतिहास पुराना ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

kāla karma guna dōṣa subhā'ū. kachu dukha tumhahi na byāpihi kā'ū. 1.
rāma rahasya lalita bidhi nānā. gupta pragaṭa itihāsa purānā. 2.

You would be immune to the effects of Kaal (time, circumstances and death), Karma (deeds and actions), Guna (good, the mediocre and the bad qualities; the Sata Guna, the Raja Guna and the Tama Guna respectively), the various faults associated with one’s nature and habits, and all other causes of grief, pain, miseries and torments in this world¹. (1)

The myriads of fascinating spiritual secrets related to Lord Ram—those that are well known as well as those that are too mysterious, esoteric and profound to be common

knowledge—as narrated and expounded in the different Itihas and Purans (ancient chronicles and mythological histories) explicitly or implicitly --- (2)

[Note—¹A similar blessing was granted to Kaagbhusund by Lord Shiva as well as Lord Ram. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 109 where Lord Shiva has blessed him; and (ii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 88 where Lord Ram has blessed him.]

बिनु श्रम तुम्ह जानब सब सोऊ । नित नव नेह राम पद होऊ ॥ ३ ॥
जो इच्छा करिहहु मन माहीं । हरि प्रसाद कछु दुर्लभ नाहीं ॥ ४ ॥

binu śrama tumha jānaba saba sō'ū. nita nava nēha rāma pada hō'ū. 3.
jō icchā karihahu mana māhīm. hari prasāda kachu durlabha nāhīm. 4.

--- You will know them all without effort. [To wit, the profound secrets associated with Lord Ram would be known to you in a natural way.]¹

You shall have abiding love and affection (devotion) at the holy feet of Lord Ram, and this glorious quality would get enhanced day by day². (3)

Whatever you shall wish in your Mana (mind and heart), every such wish would be fulfilled by the grace of Lord Hari (Lord Ram); nothing would be beyond your reach.” (4)

[Note—¹A similar blessing was granted by Lord Ram to Kaagbhusund. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 84; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 85.

²Lord Shiva has also blessed Kaagbhusund in this way. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 10 that precedes Doha no. 109.]

सुनि मुनि आसिष सुनु मतिधीरा । ब्रह्मगिरा भइ गगन गँभीरा ॥ ५ ॥
एवमस्तु तव बच मुनि ग्यानी । यह मम भगत कर्म मन बानी ॥ ६ ॥

sunī muni āsiṣa sunu matidhīrā. brahmagirā bha'i gagana gaṁbhīrā. 5.
ēvamastu tava baca muni gyānī. yaha mama bhagata karma mana bānī. 6.

Oh the one with a steady mind (“matidhīrā”—a reference to Garud and said to show respect to him)! Listen. Upon hearing the words of blessings of the sage, there was a deep and resounding voice from the sky (from the heaven). (5)

It was the invisible voice of Brahm (the Supreme Being) who endorsed the sage’s blessings by saying, “Oh learned and wise sage! Let your words come true. He (Kaagbhusund) is truly me ardent devotee with his Karma (deeds), Mana (mind and heart) and Vachan (spoken words)¹.” (6)

[Note—¹The heavenly voice was that of Brahm, the Supreme Being known as Lord Ram, who endorsed sage Lomus and affirmed that Kaagbhusund was a true devotee of the Lord. Earlier we have read that when Lord Shiva had blessed him, his Guru of previous life too had endorsed the Lord's blessings by saying "so be it". Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 109-a.]

सुनि नभगिरा हरष मोहि भयऊ । प्रेम मगन सब संसय गयऊ ॥ ७ ॥
करि बिनती मुनि आयसु पाई । पद सरोज पुनि पुनि सिरु नाई ॥ ८ ॥

suni nabhagirā haraṣa mōhi bhaya'ū. prēma magana saba sansaya gaya'ū. 7.
kari binatī muni āyasu pā'ī. pada sarōja puni puni siru nā'ī. 8.

When I heard the voice from the heaven I felt very happy. I was overwhelmed with the emotions of love and affection (for my dear Lord Ram), and all my doubts and fears (about my destiny) gradually vanished (and I felt reassured of a blissful spiritual life). (7)

Thence, I prayed to the sage, bowed my head repeatedly at his feet, and sought his permission (to leave). (8)

हरष सहित एहि आश्रम आयउँ । प्रभु प्रसाद दुर्लभ बर पायउँ ॥ ९ ॥
इहाँ बसत मोहि सुनु खग ईसा । बीते कल्प सात अरु बीसा ॥ १० ॥

haraṣa sahita ēhiṁ āśrama āya'um'. prabhu prasāda durlabha bara pāya'um'. 9.
ihāṁ' basata mōhi sunu khaga īsā. bītē kalapa sāta aru bīsā. 10.

Then I came to this hermitage most cheerfully and with a delighted heart. Indeed, by the grace of my Lord (Sri Ram), I had been fortunate to be blessed with a boon that was very rare indeed to get. (9)

Oh the Lord of Birds ("khaga īsā"—i.e. Garud)! I have been living in this hermitage for twenty-seven Kalpas (cycles of creation and destruction). (10)

करउँ सदा रघुपति गुन गाना । सादर सुनहिं बिहंग सुजाना ॥ ११ ॥
जब जब अवधपुरीं रघुबीरा । धरहिं भगत हित मनुज सरीरा ॥ १२ ॥

kara'um' sadā raghupati guna gānā. sādara sunahim bihaṅga sujānā. 11.
jaba jaba avadhapurīm raghubīrā. dharahim bhagata hita manuja sarīrā. 12.

While living here I always narrate the divine virtues and sacred glories (stories) of Lord Raghupati (Sri Ram) even as birds who are wise and intelligent come to me to hear these narrations.

[To wit, this gives me an opportunity to share the spiritual nectar that I had accessed by the grace of the Lord with other Jivas or living beings. It also helps me to constantly remember Lord Ram and remain submerged in the thoughts of the Lord, which gives an intense sense of bliss and contentedness to my own soul. I feel privileged that the Lord had chosen me to spread his glories by making me narrate stories of the Lord to other creatures.] (11)

Meanwhile, whenever Lord Raghubir (Lord Ram, the brave Lord of the kings descending from Raghu) takes birth as a human being in Ayodhya for the benefit of his devotees and followers --- (12)

तब तब जाइ राम पुर रहऊँ । सिसुलीला बिलोकि सुख लहऊँ ॥ १३ ॥
पुनि उर राखि राम सिसुरूपा । निज आश्रम आवउँ खगभूषा ॥ १४ ॥

taba taba jā'i rāma pura raha'ūm̃. sisulīlā bilōki sukha laha'ūm̃. 13.
puni ura rākhī rāma sisurūpā. nija āśrama āva'um̃ khagabhūpā. 14.

--- On all those occasions I go and stay in the capital city of Lord Ram (i.e. at Ayodhya)¹. There, I witness the Lord's activities as a child, and this gives me immense joy and happiness. (13)

After sometime, I enshrine the Lord's image as a child in my heart and come back to my hermitage (here on Mt. Neel)². (14)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-8 that precede Doha no. 75.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 89.]

कथा सकल मैं तुम्हहि सुनाई । काग देह जेहिं कारन पाई ॥ १५ ॥
कहिउँ तात सब प्रस्न तुम्हारी । राम भगति महिमा अति भारी ॥ १६ ॥

kathā sakala mair̃ tumhahi sunā'ī. kāga dēha jēhim̃ kārana pā'ī. 15.
kahi'um̃ tāta saba prasna tumhārī. rāma bhagati mahimā ati bhārī. 16.

I have described to you the circumstances due to which I had to become a 'crow'. (15)

Oh Dear (tāta)! I have answered all your queries. Ah! In all sooth and without gainsay, the glory of having devotion for Lord Ram is indeed stupendous and beyond measure¹. (16)

[Note—¹It is this virtue of devotion that acted as a shield for me and provided immunity from the sage's wrath. Instead of being doomed by his curse, I was blessed by him to get eternal bliss, happiness, beatitude and peace. I was blessed to be free from all sorts of worldly torments and miseries. I was blessed to be free from faults

and taints that are inherent in all creatures who take birth. I was granted free access to anywhere I wished to go. I was granted access to even the most secret of knowledge. I was granted control over my destiny. And the icing on the cake was that even Lord Ram had praised me in front of sage Lomus when the heavenly voice said that I was the Lord's faithful devotee, and that the Lord endorses whatever boon the sage had granted me. Say, what more would anyone want!]

दो०. ताते यह तन मोहि प्रिय भयउ राम पद नेह ।

निज प्रभु दरसन पायउँ गए सकल संदेह ॥ ११४ (क) ॥

dōhā.

tātē yaha tana mōhi priya bhaya'u rāma pada nēha.

nija prabhu darasana pāya'um̐ ga'ē sakala sandēha. 114 (a).

The reason why this body of a crow is so dear to me is because I had attained devotion and affection for the holy feet of Lord Ram by the medium of it¹. Then, I was fortunate to have a divine sight of the Lord from close quarters in this body², and this experience had removed all my doubts and confusions³. (Doha no. 114-a)

[Note—¹Kaagbhusund had obtained the blessing of sage Lomus that he would have eternal devotion for Lord Ram and all the spiritual secrets of the Lord would be known to him when he had become a 'crow' due to the sage's curse. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Doha no. 112-a; and (ii) Chaupai line no. 16 that precedes Doha no. 113—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 114.

Earlier he was a Brahmin, and prior to that he had assumed countless forms as different types of creatures during his journey through myriad wombs in the cycle of birth and death. But never did he ever find the sort of spiritual contentedness, bliss, joy and happiness as he had got as a crow. That is why he loved this body the most. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 110—when he was born as a Brahmin; (ii) Chaupai line no. that precedes Doha no. 97 when he was born as a Shudra; (iii) Doha no. 109-b and 109-c where he says that first he had become a serpent and then many other creatures due to Lord Shiva's curse; and (iv) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 110 where he says that he had also become a member of some sub-human species as well as god during the long-haul journey through the cycle of transmigration.

²In his body of a crow, Kaagbhusund had the rarest of rare honour and privilege of staying near Lord Ram and playing with him when the Lord was an infant. No other living being other than Kaagbhusund has ever had this honour. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 75—to Doha no. 77-a.

³Seeing the Lord's human behaviour, Kaagbhusund was greatly perplexed, and doubts and confusions of a variety of sorts overwhelmed his heart and mind. He wondered how it is ever possible that the Supreme Being would behave like an ordinary child. So the Lord showed him is 'Viraat Form', a stupendous form that was exceedingly mysterious, most incomprehensible and beyond imagination, as it was at once very esoteric, astoundingly magical, and of cosmic proportions. Then Kaagbhusund

realised the true nature of Lord Ram, and all his doubts and confusions regarding the Lord's divinity and holiness vanished. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Doha no. 77-b—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 83; and (ii) from Sortha no. 90-b—to Sortha no. 92-b.]

[PAUSE 29 FOR A THIRTY-DAY RECITATION]

भगति पच्छ हठ करि रहेउँ दीन्हि महारिषि साप ।
मुनि दुर्लभ बर पायउँ देखहु भजन प्रताप ॥ ११४ (ख) ॥

bhagati paccha haṭha kari rahē'um' dīnhi mahāriṣi sāpa.
muni durlabha bara pāya'um' dēkhahu bhajana pratāpa. 114 (b).

I had stubbornly taken the side of Bhakti (devotion for Lord Ram) and adhered to this spiritual path, strongly espousing this cause, for which the great sage (Lomus) had cursed me (to become a crow).

But note this point that at the same time I was blessed with the grant of boons that not even great seers and hermits can have¹. It clearly establishes the spiritual powers and the stupendous glories of the virtue of having devotion for Lord Ram, and the astounding positive effects that worshipping the Lord has for the creature. (Doha no.114-b)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 113 along with Chaupai line nos. 6, 9 and 16 that precede it—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 114.]

चौ०. जे असि भगति जानि परिहरहीं । केवल ग्यान हेतु श्रम करहीं ॥ १ ॥
ते जड़ कामधेनु गृहँ त्यागी । खोजत आकु फिरहिं पय लागी ॥ २ ॥
caupāī.

jē asi bhagati jāni pariharahīm. kēvala gyāna hētu śrama karahīm. 1.
tē jaṛa kāmādhēnu gr̥ham' tyāgī. khōjata āku phirahīm paya lāgī. 2.

Those who discard or abandon such a glorious path of Bhakti (devotion for the Lord as a means of spiritual fulfilment and attainment of bliss, peace, happiness and deliverance) inspite of knowing its astounding virtues and stupendous authority and powers, and instead make strenuous efforts to pursue the path of Gyan (acquisition of wisdom and knowledge as elucidated in the scriptures such as the Vedas, the Purans etc.) for their spiritual needs [1]—verily indeed and in all sooth, such people are stupids as they leave the Kaamdhenu cow (the all wish-fulfilling cow) that is present in their own homes and go out searching for milk seeping from the stem of the Aak plant (the milk-weed; the swallow-wart plant) [2].¹ (1-2)

[Note—¹If one can attain one's objective by an easy and simple method, there is no sense and wisdom in undergoing hardships and suffering for attaining it by other more

complicated and difficult means. Bhakti is a simple method to attain spiritual blessedness so much so that even those who are illiterates can attain joy, happiness, bliss and freedom from the chain of birth and death by following the path of devotion and love for Lord God. Hence, what sense is there in following the difficult and strenuous path of ‘Gyan’ which requires high mental abilities, a lot of effort and observance of so many vows and religious practices entailing diligence and sufferance that it becomes almost impossible to adhere to it faithfully and to achieve success through it.

The superiority of Bhakti over Gyan has been endorsed by Lord Ram himself in Ram Charit Manas. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (i) Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 35—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 36; and (ii) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 45—to Doha no. 46.

Kaagbhusund has also elaborated on this principle of Bhakti being better than Gyan in one’s spiritual quest in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 119—to Doha no. 120.]

सुनु खगेस हरि भगति बिहाई । जे सुख चाहिं आन उपाई ॥ ३ ॥
ते सठ महासिंधु बिनु तरनी । पैरि पार चाहिं जड़ करनी ॥ ४ ॥

sunu khagēsa hari bhagati bihāī. jē sukha cāhahim āna upāī. 3.
tē saṭha mahāsindhu binu taranī. pairi pāra cāhahim jaṛa karanī. 4.

Oh the King of Birds (khagēsa)! Listen. Those who desire to have happiness, peace, solace and succour, those who wish to feel blessed and contented, those who want freedom from worldly miseries and torments, those who are desirous of attaining liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death—if they abandon or discard the path of Bhakti¹ and seek these blessings by following any other means, then they are exceedingly stupid and unfortunate ones. (3)

Such duds wish to cross a huge ocean by swimming across it instead of boarding a ship that is reliable and sturdy.

[To wit, just as it is impossible to cross a huge ocean by swimming across it, so it is also impossible to cross the world of transmigration without the help of Bhakti for Lord Ram. ‘Bhakti’ here refers to the glorious virtues of devotion, worship, faith, affection, commitment, reverence, submission and selfless service for Lord Ram.]², (4)

[Note—¹Refer to following verses for more on the concept of ‘Bhakti’: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 84—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 85; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 95; (iii) Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 115; (iv) Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precede Doha no. 119; (v) Chaupai line nos. 7-19 that precede Doha no. 122.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 122 along with Chaupai line nos. 15-19 that precede it where the same idea is explicitly reiterated.]

सुनि भसुंडि के बचन भवानी । बोलेउ गरुड़ हरषि मृदु बानी ॥ ५ ॥
तव प्रसाद प्रभु मम उर माहीं । संसय सोक मोह भ्रम नाहीं ॥ ६ ॥

sunī bhasuṇḍi kē bacana bhavānī. bōlē'u garuṛa haraṣi mṛdu bānī. 5.
tava prasāda prabhu mama ura māhīm. sansaya sōka mōha bhrama nāhīm. 6.

{Lord Shiva, who was narrating the conversation between Kaagbhusund and Garud to his consort Parvati, who was also known as 'Bhavani' as she was the consort of 'Bhava', one of the many names of Shiva, continued with his narration as follows—}

'Oh Bhavani! When Garud heard what Kaagbhusund had told him, he was exhilarated. He once again spoke sweetly to Kaagbhusund, praising him and telling him that his discourse has removed all sorts of doubts and delusions from his heart and mind. (5)

Garud courteously said to Kaagbhusund, "Oh Lord (prabhu)! By your grace, no doubt, sorrow, delusion and confusion remain in my heart¹. (6)

[Note—¹To wit, now I know the reality and truth of Lord Ram. Previously I was confounded by the Lord's behaviour which was like that of an ordinary human being. Even you were similarly confused when you saw Lord Ram playing like an ordinary human child. But then Lord Ram had shown you his 'Viraat Form' that was the all-encompassing and all-pervading cosmic form of Brahm, the Supreme Being. Now having heard it directly from you who are a witness to it, I am convinced.

I am so fortunate to have come to someone who was as confused about the Lord's authenticity and divinity as I was. I thank Lord Shiva to have sent me to you. It is very convincing and reassuring to hear about the Lord's truth and reality, about his divinity and holiness, about Lord Ram being the Supreme Being himself in a human form due to certain circumstances, from someone who is a first-hand eye-witness to the events that prove it. For this, I am full of gratitude towards you.]

सुनेउँ पुनीत राम गुन ग्रामा । तुम्हरी कृपाँ लहेउँ बिश्रामा ॥ ७ ॥
एक बात प्रभु पूँछउँ तोही । कहहु बुझाइ कृपानिधि मोही ॥ ८ ॥

sunē'um' punīta rāma guna grāmā. tumharī kṛpām' lahē'um' bīśrāmā. 7.
ēka bāta prabhu pūm'cha'um' tōhī. kahahu bujhā'i kṛpānidhi mōhī. 8.

By your kindness and grace, I was able to hear the magnificent glories and the divine stories of Lord Ram which bestowed immense contentedness and peace to me. (7)

Oh Lord (prabhu)! Now, I shall enquire about one more thing from you. Oh an embodiment of kindness and mercy (kṛpānidhi)! Please be gracious enough to explain it to me. (8)

कहहिं संत मुनि बेद पुराना । नहिं कछु दुर्लभ ग्यान समाना ॥ ९ ॥

सोइ मुनि तुम्ह सन कहेउ गोसाईं । नहिं आदरेहु भगति की नाई ॥ १० ॥

kahahim santa muni bēda purānā. nahim kachu durlabha gyāna samānā. 9.
sō'i muni tumha sana kahē'u gōsā'īm. nahim ādarēhu bhagati kī nā'īm. 10.

Saints, sages, the scriptures such as the Vedas and the Purans—all are of an unanimous view that there is nothing like the virtue of 'Gyan' (metaphysical knowledge, wisdom, self-realisation, enlightenment, acquisition of true awareness and knowledge pertaining to the Atma, the soul and the pure consciousness, and other such esoteric matters related to spiritualism). (9)

Oh my Lord (gōsā'īm)! That same eclectic virtue of 'Gyan' was being preached to you by the sage (Lomus). But you did not show it as much respect as you had shown to 'Bhakti'; you did not prefer Gyan over Bhakti¹. [And the thing went out of control to such an extent that the sage had even cursed you. Yet, you did not feel regret, but mysteriously it was the sage who felt remorseful for his anger at you, and lamented gravely for it. Then he had profusely blessed you with boons that are rare to get. I am awed by these events. I wonder what special is there in Bhakti that you had preferred it and which led you to attain immortality and blessedness inspite of being cursed. So I wish to learn more about the spiritual importance and the significance of Bhakti.] (10)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Doha no. 110-b—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 114.]

ग्यानहि भगतिहि अंतर केता । सकल कहहु प्रभु कृपा निकेता ॥ ११ ॥

सुनि उरगारि बचन सुख माना । सादर बोलेउ काग सुजाना ॥ १२ ॥

gyānahi bhagatihi antara kētā. sakala kahahu prabhu krpā nikētā. 11.
suni uragāri bacana sukha mānā. sādara bōlē'u kāga sujānā. 12.

Oh an abode of mercy and compassion (krpā nikētā)! What is the difference between Gyan and Bhakti? Please tell me all about it.' (11)

Hearing the polite words of Garud (the enemy of serpents—"uragāri"), the sagacious and erudite crow (Kaagbhusund) said (i.e. began to explain the difference between Gyan and Bhakti) as follows --- (12)

भगतिहि ग्यानहि नहिं कछु भेदा । उभय हरहिं भव संभव खेदा ॥ १३ ॥

नाथ मुनीस कहहिं कछु अंतर । सावधान सोउ सुनु बिहंगबर ॥ १४ ॥

bhagatihi gyānahi nahim kachu bhēdā. ubhaya harahim bhava sambhava
khēdā. 13.
nātha munīsa kahahim kachu antara. sāvadhāna sō'u sunu bihaṅgabara. 14.

‘There is no difference whatsoever between Gyan and Bhakti. Both of them have to powers to eliminate the countless miseries, sufferings and torments having their origin in this mortal gross world of transmigration. [There is no difference between them, both of them are equally potent and efficacious in eliminating the horrors and torments of birth and death.] (13)

However, great learned sages and seers have pointed out some subtle differences between the two. Oh the most exalted amongst the birds (“bihaṅgabara”—i.e. Garud)! Listen carefully as I enumerate them for you. (14)

ग्यान बिराग जोग बिग्याना । ए सब पुरुष सुनहु हरिजाना ॥ १५ ॥
पुरुष प्रताप प्रबल सब भाँती । अबला अबल सहज जड़ जाती ॥ १६ ॥

gyāna birāga jōga bigyānā. ē saba puruṣa sunahu harijānā. 15.
puruṣa pratāpa prabala saba bhāmṭī. abalā abala sahaja jara jātī. 16.

Oh the devotee of Lord Hari and his mount (“harijānā”—Garud)! Gyan (metaphysics; gnosis; wisdom and knowledge of the Atma or pure consciousness as being the creature’s true self), Vairagya (renunciation, detachment, dispassion), Yoga (meditation and contemplation leading to oneness with the Supreme Being) and Vigyan (deep and analytical knowledge pertaining to existence and the truth behind it)—all of them are conceived as ‘masculine forces’¹. (15)

A man’s strength, ability and powers are astounding, and he can do wonderful things and achieve stupendous success if he is so determined. On the other hand, a ‘female’ (here referring to ‘Maya’ or delusions) is regarded as being naturally weak in strength and physical powers as well as dull when compared to her male counterpart (which is ‘Gyan’ here)². (16)

[Note—¹These virtues and qualities are dynamic spiritual forces of seminal potentials. They are very powerful and effective tools by which one can achieve whatever one wishes. Those who practice them consider themselves wise, potent, powerful and able. They think that they are ‘manly’ because they are making efforts to achieve what they want; they are sure that they can attain their objectives by relying on these methods as these methods are very effective and powerful. Any hindrance in this path annoys them and invites their wrath. At the same time, if they fail to achieve success by following these paths, they feel impotent and depressed as if everything has been lost for them much like a ‘man’ who cannot do what he wants to do.

²Just like the case of a domineering male who can subdue a female, Gyan can help its practitioners to vanquish Maya or delusions. So those who adopt the path of Gyan are easily able to overcome the negative effects of worldly delusions.]

दो०. पुरुष त्यागि सक नारिहि जो बिरक्त मति धीर ।
न तु कामी बिषयाबस बिमुख जो पद रघुबीर ॥ ११५ (क) ॥
dōhā.

puruṣa tyāgi saka nārihi jō birakta mati dhīra.
na tu kāmī biṣayābasa bimukha jō pada raghubīra. 115 (a).

If a man has a steady mind which has renounced lust and passions, if he is not a slave to his sensual urges, then he can very easily turn away from even the most voluptuous woman.

On the other hand, those who have turned away from the holy feet of Lord Raghubir (Sri Ram) are the ones who will find it difficult to control themselves and are easy prey to lust and passions.

[To wit, those who have devotion for Lord Ram develop detachment from sensual pleasures as they find no charm in it. They find devotion to be an extremely better tool and a sustainable source for deriving pleasure and comfort for their souls. They realise that sensual pleasures are transient and result in grief at the end. So they do not fall in this trap no matter how strong is the temptation.]¹ (Doha no. 115-a)

[Note—¹Gyan, Vairagya, Yoga and Vigyan—these are all masculine in nature and regarded as the muscular male who has strength and powers, but who can be easily corrupted. A man is physically stronger and more powerful as compared to his female counterpart, and this is right from their birth as a natural phenomenon. Only a man who is resolute and firm in his mind can remain unattached and forsake being lured by the deluding and entrapping charms of a woman, and not the one who is lascivious and passionate and has turned away from the holy feet of Lord Ram.]

सो०. सोड मुनि ग्याननिधान मृगनयनी बिधु मुख निरखि ।
बिबस होइ हरिजान नारि बिष्नु माया प्रगट ॥ ११५ (ख) ॥
sōraṭhā.

sō'u muni gyānanidhāna mṛganayanī bidhu mukha nirakhi.
bibasa hō'i harijāna nāri biṣnu māyā pragaṭa. 115 (b).

Even exalted sages who pride themselves as being a living embodiments of wisdom and enlightenment lose their sense of propriety and become ensnared by lustful glances cast by beautiful woman with bewitching fawn-like eyes.

[To wit, they become overcome with passion and desire when a charming lady shows sensual attraction for them and makes lustful gestures at them. They find it hard to resist such sexual advances.]

Oh a devotee of Lord Hari and his mount (harijāna)! It is the Maya (delusion creating powers) of Lord Vishnu which has manifested itself in the form of a female. [That is why Maya is regarded as a 'feminine gender' as I have told you earlier.]¹ (Sortha no. 115-b)

[Note—¹Refer: Chaupai line no. 16 that precedes this Doha/Sortha no. 115 herein above.]

चौ०. इहाँ न पच्छपात कछु राखउँ । बेद पुरान संत मत भाषउँ ॥ १ ॥
मोह न नारि नारि केँ रूपा । पन्नगारि यह रीति अनूपा ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

ihām' na pacchapāta kachu rākha'um'. bēda purāna santa mata bhāṣa'um'. 1.
mōha na nāri nāri kēm rūpā. pannagāri yaha rīti anūpā. 2.

[Sage Kaagbhusund says—] 'I am not speaking in a partisan way, favouring anyone and taking sides with any one of the two entities, Bhakti and Maya. To wit, what I am telling you is not my personal view or preference, but it is a well-considered view as established by the Vedas and the Purans (primary and ancient scriptures) as well as affirmed by the learned sages and seers. (1)

[And what is it?] Their opinion is that a female is not attracted to, enamoured or aroused by another female's beauty and charm. Oh the enemy of serpents (a reference to Garud who devours serpents, being an Eagle), this is a unique and strange (but well-established) phenomenon¹. (2)

[Note—¹"I do not speak in a partisan way, but only reiterate what the Vedas, Purans and saints have asserted in this context. A woman is never enamoured by the beauty of another woman."]

This is a well-established phenomenon of Nature that opposites attract, and similars repel. This is seen even in inanimate things of the world—we see this in a magnet. Two opposite poles of a magnet, the north and the south poles, would attract each other, but similar poles repel. A male is attracted to a female and vice versa, but a female is rather jealous, envious of another female instead of being charmed by her.

This observation of Kaagbhusund builds the ground and paves the way for what he will now preach in the following verses.]

माया भगति सुनहु तुम्ह दोऊ । नारि बर्ग जानइ सब कोऊ ॥ ३ ॥

पुनि रघुबीरहि भगति पिआरी । माया खलु नर्तकी बिचारी ॥ ४ ॥

māyā bhagati sunahu tumha dō'ū. nāri barga jāna'i saba kō'ū. 3.
puni raghubirahi bhagati pi'ārī. māyā khalu nartakī bicārī. 4.

'Maya' (worldly delusions) and 'Bhakti' (devotion for Lord God) are both of the feminine gender¹. Everyone (i.e. every wise man) is aware of it. (3)

But there is a difference between the two. While 'Bhakti' is very dear to Lord Raghbir (Ram) and the Lord is favourably inclined towards it (because it has auspicious virtues and endeavours to bring the creature nearer to the Lord instead of pushing him away from the him as done by Maya), the poor 'Maya' on the other hand is like a cunning dancing girl or a courtesan who is not looked at with respect even by the king himself (who uses her services as and when he requires them, but he dislikes her internally because he knows that she has no character).² (4)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (i) Aranya Kand, Doha no. 43; (ii) Uttar Kand, Doha no. 70-b.

'Maya' or delusions and 'Bhakti' or devotion, both have been classified as being maids of Lord Ram. But the Lord is favourable towards Bhakti because it

represents noble and virtuous qualities in a creature that uplift his soul, whereas Maya is simply like a dancing girl as it represents worldly taints and evil qualities that are spiritually demeaning for the creature. So if a creature has the virtue of Bhakti for the Lord in him, Maya is sore affright to disturb such a creature because it would offend the Lord as he prefers Bhakti over Maya.

Bhakti and Maya are treated as ‘females or maids’. This is because their ‘Lord’ here is Sri Ram, a manifested human ‘male’ form of the Supreme Being who was also a ‘King’ of Ayodhya. The Upanishads and other Vedic texts call the Supreme Being as the ‘Viraat Purush’, the Cosmic Male. Another word used as a synonym for the Supreme Being is ‘Brahm’, but Brahm represents the very basis of creation, i.e. the Cosmic Consciousness that has no gender. When this Cosmic Consciousness started the process of creation, there evolved, in a step-by-step manner and in an increasingly grosser form, a cosmic Male and a cosmic Female to give shape to and help in self-propagation of the forthcoming creation, and to maintain its self-perpetuating forward movement in the form of a never ending cycle of creation and destruction. The primary form of the Cosmic Male was known as the ‘Viraat Purush’ (“Male”) and the primary form of the Cosmic Female was known as the ‘Shakti’ (the Male’s authority, powers, dynamism and energy to act and do something).

As in all cases where ‘Shakti’ is involved, it can turn out to be either ‘bad’ or ‘good’. If it is ‘good’ then this Shakti is loved by the Lord; if it turns out to be ‘bad’, it is disliked by the Lord. This is what happens in practice with Bhakti and Maya respectively. Whereas the Lord favours Bhakti, he abhors Maya, though both are under his domain and command.

Remember: These are symbolic ways of explaining complicated metaphysical principles which basically mean that if a living being has the good virtue of devotion and faith for the Lord God inside him, the negative traits associated with delusions would not darken his inner-self.

In this context, refer to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 43—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 45; and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 46.

In Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 71 (b) it is asserted that Maya is like a ‘maid’ servant of Lord Raghubir (Ram). And in Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that follow this Doha it is asserted that Maya that is so powerful that it makes the whole world dance to its tune is scared of annoying the Lord so much that all its moves are in accordance with the signals given by the movement of Lord Ram’s eyebrows. That is, Maya keeps alert and closely watches how Lord Ram reacts to her maverick tricks. If she gets even a slight hint that any of her moves are disliked by her Lord, she immediately mends her ways.

In the context of Bhakti it is clear that since Lord Ram prefers it over Maya, the latter dares not offend the former because that would indirectly offend her Lord, Sri Ram.

The net effect of this scenario is that if a person has the virtue of ‘Bhakti’ in him then he is assured of freedom from getting tormented by Maya and the rest of her associates which are listed below.

‘Maya’ is a term that incorporates in its meaning a lot many spiritual problems. They are called the ‘family of Maya’ because they are all related to each other and work in tandem. These inalienable components of Maya are formidably powerful so much so that they don’t spare even the creator Brahma as well as Lord

Shiva from their clutches. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 70—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 71.

²While having the virtue of Bhakti enables a person to attain spiritual purity and bliss, Maya on the other hand engulfs him in a web of miseries and problems that are associated with this gross and perishable material world of sense objects. So therefore, Lord Ram prefers Bhakti as it helps its adherents to become pious and holy and acquire auspicious spiritual values. Maya pushes the creature into the vortex of worldly desires and injects in him many negative qualities. So Lord Ram dislikes it.

The negative qualities that are natural accompaniments of Maya have been listed in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 70—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 71. They are called the ‘family members’ of Maya because they all bear the characters of delusion and their resultant problems for the creature (refer: Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 71).

These so-called associates or ‘family members’ of Maya are the following—Moha (attachment, infatuation), Kaam (lust, passion), Trishna (desires, yearning), Krodh (anger), Lobha (greed), Sri Mada (pride of self; pride of honour and achievements, of worldly prosperity and wealth), Gunas (the three inherent qualities of Sata, Raja and Tama Gunas that every living being possesses, and which mould his character and personality), Maana Mada (arrogance and haughtiness that comes with honour, success and respect), Joban Jwar (the recklessness and arrogance of youth), Mamta (affection and attachment to worldly things), Matsarya (envy, jealousy), Shoka (grief), Chinta (worry), Maya (delusions), Manorath (hopes, aspirations, vows, desires, determination to do this and achieve that), and the trio consisting of son/progeny-wealth/prosperity-fame/good name.

The independent and combined effects of all these entities on the creature has been explained alongside each verse in the text.]

भगतिहि सानुकूल रघुराया । ताते तेहि डरपति अति माया ॥ ५ ॥

राम भगति निरुपम निरुपाधी । बसइ जासु उर सदा अबाधी ॥ ६ ॥

bhagatihi sānukūla raghurāyā. tāte tēhi ḍarapati ati māyā. 5.

rāma bhagati nirupama nirupādhi. basa'i jāsū ura sadā abādhi. 6.

Lord Ram is kind and favourably disposed towards ‘Bhakti’ (devotion). This is the reason why ‘Maya’ (delusion creating powers of the Lord) is scared of it (Bhakti)¹.

[Here, Bhakti and Maya have been personified, and regarded as close associates of the Lord. ‘Bhakti’ is the favourite of Lord Ram, so the Lord’s maid known as ‘Maya’ is scared to offend the former. On the other hand, Maya does everything within its reach to please Bhakti in order to indirectly please her Lord, Sri Ram, and be in the Lord’s good books by being docile and obedient.] (5)

The spiritual virtue known as ‘Bhakti for Lord Ram’, or devotion for the Lord, is highly pure and immaculate; it is without any worldly taints or negativity; it is matchless in its purity and effectiveness². [Whereas, on the other hand, ‘Maya’ is a corrupt entity, and so it has no moral strength to face the pure entity known as ‘Bhakti’. While ‘Bhakti’ leads the creature towards the Lord, ‘Maya’ pulls him away

from him. While ‘Bhakti’ helps the creature obtain liberation and deliverance as well as eternal peace and bliss, ‘Maya’ does the opposite: it forces the creature in the quicksand of worldly delusions and its attendant miseries and torments.]

So, ‘Maya’ is afraid to disturb anyone in whose heart the eclectic spiritual virtue of ‘Bhakti’ finds a permanent residence. Maya is hesitant to play its tricks upon a person in whose heart Bhakti resides³. [Maya knows that if it plays smart with the Lord’s devotee who has Bhakti or devotion for Lord Ram in his heart, then it is sure to offend the Lord who shall punish her for her demeanours because, as has been said above, the Lord favours Bhakti for its immaculate and pious nature as well as its endeavour to provide spiritual peace and liberation to the soul of the living being—which Maya does not do.] (6)

[Note—¹It has been said in Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 116 herein above that “Maya is like a dancer”. The dancer would adopt the posture that pleases her master, and would synchronise all her dance moves in accordance with the liking of the lord for whom she dances. So obviously, Maya would not invite the wrath of her Lord, Sri Ram, by offending the Lord’s favourite maid known as Bhakti.

²Lord Ram has himself preached on the importance and spiritual value of Bhakti at many places in Ram Charit Manas.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Aranya Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 14—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 16 (to Laxman); (ii) from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 35—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 36 (to Sabari); (iii) Chaupai line nos. 4-10 that precede Doha no. 43 (to Narad); (b) Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 85; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 9-10 that precede Doha no. 86; (iii) Doha no. 87-a (to Kaagbhusund); (iv) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 45; (v) Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 46 (to the citizens of Ayodhya).

³Goddess Saraswati, the patron goddess of knowledge and wisdom, has also endorsed this fact that a person in whose heart Lord Ram’s Bhakti resides, Maya has no effect on him. That is, it is not possible to delude a sincere devotee of the Lord as the Lord protects him from all negative influences that may harm his peace of mind and undermine his spiritual future. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-7 that precede Doha no. 295.]

तेहि बिलोकि माया सकुचाई । करि न सकइ कछु निज प्रभुताई ॥ ७ ॥

अस बिचारि जे मुनि बिग्यानी । जाचहिं भगति सकल सुख खानी ॥ ८ ॥

tēhi bilōki māyā sakucā'ī. kari na saka'i kachu nija prabhutā'ī. 7.
asa bicāri jē muni bigyānī. jācahiṃ bhagati sakala sukha khānī. 8.

Maya is hesitant and reluctant to offend Bhakti and those who have this virtue in themselves; it is unable to play its dirty tricks and impose its will on those persons who have Bhakti in their hearts. (7)

Taking this fact into consideration, wise sages who are learned and intelligent have deduced that ‘Bhakti’ is a mine of all happiness and peace. (8)

[Note—Kaagbhusund emphasises in this foregoing discourse that out of all the paths and ways that are open to a spiritual aspirant, the best and the easiest is that of ‘Bhakti’ or having devotion for Lord God and total submission to the Lord. This ensures that ‘Maya’ and its powerful companions (Moha, Kaam, Trishna, Krodh, Lobha, Mada, Maan, Mamta, Matsarya, Chinta, Shoka, Manorath etc. as listed in Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 70—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 71) do not torment the aspirant.

Besides these components of Maya, there are others, collectively herded in one group called ‘Avidya’ or ignorance. This Avidya is like a knot around the heart and the mind of the spiritual aspirant. Its characters, salient features and how it affects the creature has been discussed below, from Chaupai line no. 1 that follows Doha no. 116—to Doha no. 119.]

दो०. यह रहस्य रघुनाथ कर बेगि न जानइ कोइ ।

जो जानइ रघुपति कृपाँ सपनेहुँ मोह न होइ ॥ ११६ (क) ॥

dōhā.

yaha rahasya raghunātha kara bēgi na jāna'i kō'i.

jō jāna'i raghupati krpām̐ sapanēhum̐ mōha na hō'i. 116 (a).

This topic concerning Maya and Bhakti (as discussed in the foregoing verses) is very esoteric, and it is a secret related to Lord Ragnath (Sri Ram) that no one can know easily. Whoever knows it, it is due to the grace of Lord Raghupati on him. And once it happens (i.e. once one knows the secret relationship between Maya and Bhakti, and how easily Maya can be controlled by the medium of Bhakti for the Lord), he cannot have delusions even in his dream¹. [Why? Because he would have developed Bhakti for the Lord in his heart, and therefore would not be affected by Maya or worldly delusions.] [Doha no. 116 (a).]

[Note—¹Not having delusions even in one's dream' is a figure of speech that simply means he will never have delusions ever, under any circumstance. This is because when a wise person inculcates the auspicious virtue of Bhakti (devotion) in his heart, he is blessed by all the goodness that are natural accompaniments of Bhakti, and one such bonus benefit is that Maya (worldly delusions) do not affect him. The other natural benefit is that he becomes a recipient of the Lord's grace.]

औरउ ग्यान भगति कर भेद सुनहु सुप्रबीन ।

जो सुनि होइ राम पद प्रीति सदा अबिछीन ॥ ११६ (ख) ॥

aura'u gyāna bhagati kara bhēda sunahu suprabīna.

jō suni hō'i rāma pada prīti sadā abichīna. 116 (b).

Oh wise and sagacious Garud, listen now to the difference that exists between Bhakti and Gyan (true spiritual, theological and metaphysical knowledge that is attained by diligent study of the scriptures)—by hearing which (or by being aware of the

relationship between Bhakti and Gyan) one develops steady, uninterrupted and perpetual affection (or love) for the holy feet of Lord Ram (which is one of the signs of having Bhakti for the Lord God). [Doha no. 116 (b).]

[Note—It ought to be noted here that when a person is overcome with delusions, he cannot be said to have ‘Gyan’—knowledge of the truth or knowledge of spiritual mysteries; gnos̥is. So, having Gyan it self precludes the influence of Maya. But a problem arises here often—and it is that with acquisition of Gyan one sometimes becomes proud and arrogant about his wisdom, knowledge, expertise, sagacity and erudition. Again, more often than not, acquisition of Gyan brings in its wake fame and name, and with them comes the lure of the lucre. This seeds greed and desires, which eventually lead to a vicious cycle of more greed and more desires. Sometimes it so happens that if a person who considers himself as a ‘Gyani’ (i.e. one who possesses Gyan) is not shown due respect, he feels annoyed and becomes angry for being shown disrespect.

So, simply having ‘Gyan’ does not mean that a person is free from the negative traits so closely associated with Maya. Say then, what difference does it make between person completely ridden with Maya and a person claiming himself to be wise and having the virtue of Gyan in him? Both are equally deluded and equally ignorant. They both become easy prey to nefarious designs of all the so-called ‘family members’ of Maya as enumerated earlier in Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 70—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 71. It is like a vicious whirlpool that sucks the creature in its swirling vortex.

Therefore, the discussion that follows below in regards to the relationship between Gyan and Bhakti has a direct bearing on the relationship between Maya and Bhakti—because if Gyan is not properly used, its consequences are as horrendous as the effect of Maya. ‘Not proper use of Gyan’ is called ‘Agyan’—or, ignorance. This ‘Agyan’ is also a family member of Maya, because the result they produce on the creature are the same.]

चौ०. सुनहु तात यह अकथ कहानी । समुझत बनइ न जाइ बखानी ॥ १ ॥

ईस्वर अंस जीव अबिनासी । चेतन अमल सहज सुख रासी ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

sunahu tāta yaha akatha kahānī. samujhata bana'i na jā'i bakhānī. 1.

īśvara ansa jīva abināsī. cētana amala sahaja sukha rāsī. 2.

Sage Kaagbhusund told Garud who had approached the former to dispel his ignorance on spiritual subjects—“Listen dear to this story that cannot be described in words, but it can be understood with a little bit of wisdom and sagacity. It tells us in essence the true nature of a Jiva, the living being or the creature who becomes trapped in this world and gets separated from the Supreme Being.

The Jiva is a fraction (or an image, a representative) of the Ishwar, the Supreme Being known as the Parmatma. Hence, the Jiva is also imperishable, Consciousness personified, pure, uncorrupt and immaculate in its truthful form, and an abode of bliss and happiness, just like its principal known as Ishwar¹. (Chaupai line nos. 1-2).

[Note—¹In Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Doha no. 14—to Doha no. 15 Lord Ram has explained to his younger brother how the Jiva (the individual living being) feels separated from the Supreme Being due to the delusory effects of Maya though they are one and the same entities as the underlying Truth in them is one and the same ‘pure Consciousness’ which is universal, immutable, all-pervading and all-encompassing in this living world.

Upanishads clearly say that the true identity of any living being, the ‘Jiva’ is his Atma, and this Atma is his pure conscious ‘self’, the ‘soul’. The word ‘Jiva’ itself is indicative of this fact—for it means an entity that is ‘alive, living’.

A creature’s physical existence in this world has two components—one is his visible, gross physical body which has no value as a ‘living entity’ as it has no life of its own, and the other is his invisible, subtle body which harbours the ‘the spark of life’ inside this gross body. It is the latter that makes the body ‘consciousness’ or the creature ‘alive’. If this ‘consciousness’ is removed from the gross body, the latter would be as good as dead.

Therefore, who actually is the ‘Jiva’, the living being? Obviously, the answer is ‘consciousness’ that is also known as the ‘Atma’ that lives inside the body of the Jiva, and not the gross body itself.

Now, this ‘consciousness’ is the true ‘lord of the body of the Jiva’ because the body obeys its commands and the body has any value only because this consciousness lives inside it. Otherwise, the body is ‘dead’ and ‘worthless’. This story pertains to the micro level of creation. When we consider the larger picture at the cosmic level, the macro level of creation, the same thing is replicated albeit in a larger and all-encompassing form. That is, the consciousness that gives life to an individual Jiva also gives life to all other Jivas in this creation. This macrocosmic form of consciousness is known as Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness.

The individual consciousness is a part or fraction of the cosmic Consciousness and bears a direct resemblance to the latter in all respects just like the case of the air element that all-pervading, free and without any boundaries while it lives in the open sky, but assuming a limited dimension when one considers its presence inside the walls of a vessel. There is no difference between the two forms of air as cited above; it is only how one perceives it in different contexts.

Likewise, the Jiva is a reflection of Ishwar. That is, what Ishwar, the ‘Lord’ of creation, is to the entire creation as a whole, Jiva bears the same relationship with this creation at an individual level, being the ‘lord’ of the body in which he lives and its immediate surroundings.

Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 15.

We have read above that the Jiva’s true identity is the Atma or the individual soul which is pure Consciousness. Similarly, the true identity of Ishwar, who is also known as the Parmatma or the Supreme Being, is the cosmic Atma or cosmic Soul which is also pure Consciousness. The only difference is in the level at which this ‘Consciousness’ is perceived: the Jiva is Consciousness at the micro level of creation, while Parmatma is the same Consciousness at the macro level of creation.]

सो मायाबस भयउ गोसाईं । बँध्यो कीर मरकट की नाई ॥ ३ ॥

sō māyābasa bhaya'u gōsā'īm. bam̐dhyō kīra marakaṭa kī nā'īm. 3

Oh Lord (“gōsā’irṁ”—i.e. Garud)! This Jiva (that inherits the values and characters of Ishwar), in its stupid ignorance and greed, allows itself to be tied in knots (to so many ignorance-driven misconceptions about its own self as well as the world around it) and dominated by Maya (delusions) just like a monkey or a parrot who get caught due to their own ignorance and greed. [The Jiva allows itself to get trapped due to Maya, and out of its own free will allows itself to get caught like a monkey and a bird who get caught due to their own greed.]¹ (3)

[Note—¹The monkey and the parrot are naturally free creatures of the wild, but they get caught by animal and bird catchers respectively when they are lured by some bait, usually some kind of eatable. It is the greed that makes them captive; it is their ignorance about the real intention of the food thrown towards them to catch them. They think that the monkey or the bird catcher is very kind as he is offering them food, not realising that these people are selfish and have done so to trap and enslave them for the rest of their lives.

This allusion is used to describe how the Jiva and his Atma are caught by the numerous charms of the material world.

How are the parrot and the monkey caught? The bird-catcher attaches bait that dangles from a string hanging at the end of a stick that is stuck in the ground. The poor parrot alights on the stick and tries to eat the bait, but the string begins to swirl and go round and round because of the parrot’s attempt to reach the bait. The parrot becomes so engrossed in trying to eat the bait that always moves away from its beak that it loses awareness of the impending danger while the bird catcher gets time to pounce upon the poor creature to grab it. The swirling and revolving bait completely confuses the parrot and makes it deluded.

In the case of the monkey, the catcher puts a handful of grains in a pitcher with a narrow neck and fixes it to the ground. The greedy monkey first puts in its hands in an attempt to take out the grain, but its closed fist gets stuck in the narrow neck of the pitcher. Frustrated and not wishing to let go of the grain, the monkey puts in his head. The monkey catcher then pounces upon it and catches it.

In both these cases, if the parrot and the monkey had been wise they would have not been caught. But it is their greed and desire that have forced them into captivity, and therefore they themselves are to be blamed for their captivity.

Similarly, the Jiva, the living being, is lured by the material charms of the world and the gratification they provide to the gross organs of the body. The Jiva becomes overcome by Maya or delusions, thinking that the world is its favourite place, that the world will give it happiness and joy, that the real world is this gross material world in which the body enjoys and that there is no other thing as a subtle world of pure bliss that comes with realisation of the ‘Self’.

So what happens? The Jiva goes all hog for the material world; it allows itself to be fully engrossed in and tied to the affairs of this deluding, material, gross and perishable world without understanding that it will rob it of its peace and tranquility. This is what Maya does to the Jiva—delude the latter into believing that what essentially is a treasury of misery will give him happiness.

Like the parrot and the monkey, if the Jiva becomes enlightened and self-realised, if wisdom and erudition dawn upon his mind and intellect, then he can distance himself from the material world, and thereby prevent his ‘self’ or his Atma from getting trapped.

The Jiva or the creature cannot serve two masters or lords at the same time. It can either serve the Lord God and his fraction living inside the body of the Jiva as his

Atma by having devotion for the Lord and becoming self-realised respectively, or it can serve the external world and its own physical body by appeasing both of them by devoting his time and energy to fulfil the demands of the world or making efforts to gratify the instincts of the sense organ of the body respectively. Even the *Holy Bible* is clear on this point when it says: “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon”—refer: St. Matthews, 6/24.

Refer also to Tulsidas’ excellent Book of Prayers known as ‘Vinai Patrika’, verse no. 246, stanza nos. 3-4. This book has also been published in English by this humble author.]

जड़ चेतनहि ग्रंथि परि गई । जदपि मृषा छूटत कठिनई ॥ ४ ॥

jara cētanahi granthi pari gaī. jadapi mṛṣā chūṭata kaṭhinaī. 4.

In this way, that Jiva, whose true self is pure ‘consciousness’ (“Chetan”) that is subtle and sublime by its inherent nature, became gross and dull (“Jada”) once it allowed itself to be tied down by the Granthis (spiritual knots of delusions and ignorance). To wit, out of ignorance and delusions, the ‘spirit’ (the holy Atma which is subtle and sublime) and the ‘matter’ (the gross material world) have become tied together in knots known as the Granthis. [In this way, that which was basically subtle and sublime pure ‘consciousness’ became tied down in knots and become something that is gross, dull and inane. So it is like tying two basically independent and separate things together by a strong knot.]

Though this knot is artificial and self-created and based on delusions (and therefore seems that it can be broken at will), yet it is hard to break and get rid of.

[It is easy said than done. Just like it may be theoretically possible for the monkey and the parrot cited above to get themselves free, but in practice it is almost impossible to realise it.]¹ (4)

[Note—¹So we see that the Atma is tied to the world in the ‘knot’ of attachments, attractions and infatuations (“Moha”) that is created by Maha (delusions) and its companion Avidya (ignorance). This knot has to be broken obviously if the Atma wishes to free its self from the bondage related to the world. We shall be reading soon how the Atma can achieve this.

The Upanishads have explained this ‘knot’ or ‘Granthi’ in detail. Now, let us read what it signifies.

The numerous emotional, sentimental and spiritual hurdles that an aspirant faces are all referred to as the Granthis because they are like the hard shell of the nut which is difficult to crack. All these Granthis of the Jiva (the living being) are created out of ignorance and delusions (Avidya or Agyan, and Maya respectively) that surround it. Just like the case that we can reach the actual kernel of the coconut fruit after we have broken the hard shell that surrounds it, the creature can realize the true nature of the Atma, the ‘self which is pure consciousness and a fraction of the supreme Atma, the Parmatma, only when the Jiva is able to overcome the dominance of Maya and Agyan.

Only when this shell is cracked can one find the nut. Similarly, only when one overcomes the numerous obstacles and hurdles faced by him in his spiritual pursuit that it is possible for him to have access to the fount of eternal bliss and peace that

comes with Brahm-realisation, which is being aware of the Absolute Truth of existence.

According to the metaphysical interpretation of the term Granthi, it is the various knots present in the heart that shackle the Atma and prevent its liberation and deliverance. These Granthis are called Hridaya Granthis because they stand in the way of a man obtaining freedom from his fetters that keep him tied to this world. Once he is able to rupture them, he finds liberation even while he is still alive in this world. This fact has been clearly emphasized in Katho-panishad, Canto 2, Valli 3, verse no. 15 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition. Refer also to Atharva Veda's Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 84; Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Mundak (Canto) 2, section 2, verse no. 8.]

तब ते जीव भयउ संसारी । छूट न ग्रंथि न होइ सुखारी ॥ ५ ॥

श्रुति पुरान बहु कहेउ उपाई । छूट न अधिक अधिक अरुझाई ॥ ६ ॥

taba tē jīva bhaya'u sansārī. chūṭa na granthi na hō'i sukhārī. 5.
śruti purāna bahu kahē'u upāī. chūṭa na adhika adhika arujhāī. 6.

{What happens when the Jiva is surrounded by the various Granthis? This question is answered now.}

It is ever since then (i.e. since the time the creature's Atma became trapped in the web of delusions created by the different 'Granthis' and began to think its self as separate from the Parmatma) that the Jiva became an entity that related to this world (which itself is gross and artificial like the Granthis), and therefore becomes subjected to birth and death (inspite of its true identity being the Atma that is pure consciousness, an entity that is imperishable and eternal)¹.

Now as it happens, the Jiva cannot get happiness and comfort till the time he is not able to get rid of these Granthis, or the knots that bog down the Atma and tie it in knots of delusions and ignorance. [To wit, the Jiva cannot get rid of the knot that ties him to this world, and therefore he cannot get rid of the misery attendant to it and become happy. He remains wallowing in pain, misery and grief for an endless period of time.]² (5)

Though the scriptures (Vedas and Purans) have prescribed a number of ways to free oneself from this knot, but to implement them is difficult, and so the cycle of misery and torments not only continues unabated but this tying-knot gets sturdier and stronger with the passage of time. (6)

[Note—¹If a person does not allow himself to be deluded by the overtures of Maya, if he is strong in his mind and convictions so as to be of a firm belief that his 'true self' is the Atma that is an image of the Supreme Atma known as the Parmatma, the person is said to be happy and blissful. He has no worries and no problems with the world.

But this is an ideal situation that is not the norm; it is rather an exception. The norm is that the creature gets tied in knots of various denominations. It is very difficult to free oneself from these knots or Granthis. The 'tied and knotted' creature, the living being, begins to think that his gross body is his real identity (instead of the Atma), that the world in which he lives is the real thing and his habitat, that this world

and its things are meant for his happiness and joy. So the Atma gets ‘hooked’ to this material world of sense objects through the creature’s gross body.

Now, everyone knows that this body was born at a given date and time, and that it would die some day and time. The world too had a specific beginning and would come to an end some or the other day. Hence, when the Jiva becomes deluded, he thinks that he had a birth and he would die. The fact is just the opposite. It is because the Jiva’s true identity is not the gross body but the Atma, the soul that is consciousness personified as well as an eternal and imperishable entity.

So the conclusion is obvious and clear: When the Jiva gets tied to spiritual knots of ignorance and delusions, he begins to identify himself with the body and the world, and by logic and corollary to the cycle of death and birth simply because the body and the world take a birth and eventually die.

²The condition of such a Jiva who is trapped in the knot of Maya is like the monkey and the parrot cited above in verse no. 3. The monkey and the parrot have got themselves in shackles, and this keeps them a slave. They cannot find happiness and joy of freedom that they had originally enjoyed before getting trapped.]

जीव हृदयं तम मोह बिसेषी । ग्रंथि छूट किमि परइ न देखी ॥ ७ ॥
अस संजोग ईस जब करई । तबहुँ कदाचित सो निरुअरई ॥ ८ ॥

jīva hr̥dayam̐ tama mōha bisēṣī. granthi chūṭa kimi para'i na dēkhī. 7.
asa san̄jōga īsa jaba kara'ī. tabahum̐ kadācita sō niru'ara'ī. 8.

There is darkness of ignorance represented by Moha (worldly attractions, attachment and infatuation) in the heart of the Jiva, and this clouds his vision (reasoning) so much therefore he cannot see the knot in the first place.

Since he cannot realise that his Atma is tied in some kind of a knot, then say how can he even ever try to un-knot or untie it and break free from it? [Unless the Jiva is able to see or realise that there is a knot around his neck, till the time he becomes aware of any shackle tied to his Atma or even become aware of its existence—how can he search for ways to free himself from this spiritual bondage?]¹ (7)

It is only when the Lord God provides some good chance that this opportunity (to break free from the knot of delusions and ignorance) can be availed of.² (8)

[Note—¹If the Jiva (the living being) allows himself to be mired by Moha (worldly attractions and infatuations) which are products of Maya (delusions) and its accompanying Agyan or Avidya (ignorance) by getting attracted to and attached with this world and its material charms, it is unable to realise the truth of his own Atma. This is equivalent to saying that the Jiva is surrounded by the “Tama of Moha”, or to remain in dark about the truth, to remain ignorant about the reality. And what is this reality or truth? It is that the Atma, the pure consciousness that resides in the subtle space of the Jiva’s heart, is his true identity and ‘self’, and not the gross body. It is this gross body which interacts with the world and gets attracted to the latter’s charms, because the organs of perception of the body are attracted towards their respective objects in the world.

For instance, the eyes are attracted to pleasant sights of the world and if the Jiva is not careful drives him to these sights so such an extent that he becomes obsessed with the desire to see the sights as much as he can. This creates longing and the Jiva would do everything under its control to be able to see those sights that please his eyes. Sometimes this may cause embarrassment and at other times this may land him in actual serious trouble when he becomes an eye witness to unsavoury developments. But in his ignorance the Jiva does not realise the bad consequences of his desire to keep the eye contented and gratified. In other words, the organ of the body known as the eye has landed the Jiva in a vicious circle of desires and expecting gratifications from the physical world and then getting attached or hooked to it. This is also metaphorically depicted by saying that the Jiva is tied to the Granthi, which is like spiritual quicksand, and it is not easily visible to the Jiva due to the darkness of delusion and ignorance that surround the Atma residing in the subtle space of the Jiva's heart.

The *Holy Bible* also cites the example of the 'eye' to teach us how the physical world pollutes our inner-selves in St. Matthews, 6/22-23 when it says: "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light; But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

The 'pure consciousness' known as the Atma lives in the subtle space of the heart of all living beings, the Jiva. For all practical purposes, this Atma is identified with the gross body of the creature as it is the latter that is visible to the world and interacts with it. For instance, we identify a car in a parking lot by its external features and not by the engine or the chassis that is hidden inside the car's body. Likewise, the world recognises the gross body of the Jiva as his identity, and not bothering about the Jiva's Atma, which in reality is the Jiva's 'true self'.

Since the Atma has to interact with the world through the medium of the gross body, it becomes dependant upon it. And the irony is that this world, as well as the body, are both gross, inane and perishable entities unlike the Atma which is subtle, sublime and eternal consciousness. So, if the Jiva allows itself to be mired in delusions and ignorance it is unable to realise the truth. This is equivalent to saying that it is surrounded by darkness ("Tama"). This is also metaphorically depicted by saying that the Jiva is tied to the Granthi or spiritual quicksand which it is unable to see due to the darkness of delusion and ignorance.

²And what is the good chance? When the Lord God is gracious and has mercy on the creature, he sends a healthy cow to reside in the creature's heart as narrated below just like a father sends a cow to his ailing son so that he can avail of her pure milk and other dairy products such as butter and butter-milk and get back to robust health. In this case the ailment is the degradation to which the soul of the creature has been subjected to due to his ignorance and indulgence in this deluding world of material sense objects. When such a creature serves this symbolic cow and drinks its wholesome milk and eats its wholesome food as described in the following narrative, his Atma regains its lost vigour and spiritual energy, and begins to shine once again like the sun does after the dark clouds are dispersed.

Therefore, this can happen only when a beautiful and holy cow symbolizing faith and devotion for the Lord God comes and makes its abode in the Jiva's courtyard (heart) that this opportunity can be made good use of. The Jiva now serves this cow, takes its milk, boils it, cools it, makes butter from it by churning it, and becomes healthy by eating it. A lot of metaphor and symbolism are used here. But in

simple term they all mean that when the Jiva begins to serve this symbolic cow and benefit from its milk that stands for gaining spiritual health, he begins to inculcate auspicious virtues one by one as follows in Chaupai line nos. 9-16.]

सात्त्विक श्रद्धा धेनु सुहाई । जौं हरि कृपाँ हृदयँ बस आई ॥ ९ ॥

sāttvika śrad'dhā dhēnu suhā'ī. jauri hari kṛpām' hṛdayam' basa ā'ī. 9.

{The following verses use the metaphor of the holy cow who has been properly served and nourished to describe how the Jiva can find freedom from the knot tied around him. First the cow is brought and kept near the Jiva's true self, i.e. in the subtle of his heart where his Atma lives. This cow is then properly nourished, and then milked. From this milk is extracted clarified butter which is then used to light the symbolic lamp of wisdom that would help to remove the darkness of Moha (worldly attachments, attractions and infatuations), that has been caused by Maya (delusions) and Avidya (ignorance), and which surrounds the Atma (the pure conscious 'self') of the Jiva (living being). With this light the Jiva is able to see the various knots symbolising worldly delusions, and then he makes efforts to break free from them.

This entire discourse on the lines of the discussions of great metaphysical principles in the Upanishads is given by sage Kaagbhusund to Garud, and is discussed below from the current verse no. 9—right upto Doha no. 118 herein below.

If by the grace of Lord Hari (i.e. Lord God), the Jiva becomes fortunate enough to have sincere faith in the Lord and devotion for him, then there are chances that he can be liberated. How will this happen? It is explained now—}

If by the grace of Lord Hari, the Jiva should first get access to a symbolic 'cow' represented by the virtue of pure and simple faith ("sāttvika śrad'dhā") in the Lord, and this cow comes to live in his pious heart---(9),

[Note—The main requirement is to have 'faith in the Lord God' in order to attain liberation and deliverance from the knots or the Granthis that tie the Jiva to the numerous delusions associated with this life. Once one has 'faith' in the Lord, 'devotion' comes immediately and naturally because one begins to regard the Lord as his saviour and dear friend who will look after all his welfare and provide him succour and solace.

Since the Atma lives in the subtle space of the heart, and this Atma is the Jiva's true self, this metaphoric cow representing faith for the Lord God must also live in the heart.

The heart in which there is place for the Lord God is indeed a 'pious heart'.

The *Avadhut Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, verse nos. 4-5, and the *Brihajjabal Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Brahman 3, verse nos. 1-13 also use the metaphor of the cow to describe the exalted state of a self-realised spiritual aspirant who has developed internal dispassion towards the world but continues to live and serve it selflessly.]

जप तप ब्रत जम नियम अपारा । जे श्रुति कह सुभ धर्म अचारा ॥ १० ॥

तेइ तृन हरित चरै जब गाई । भाव बच्छ सिसु पाइ पेन्हाई ॥ ११ ॥

japa tapa brata jama niyama apārā. jē śruti kaha subha dharma acārā. 10.
tē'i tṛṇa harita carai jaba gā'i. bhāva baccha sisu pā'i pēnhā'i. 11.

[If one has a cow, it is necessary to feed it. Hence—]

---Then he diligently observes or practices all sorts of auspicious deeds and noble virtues that have been enumerated by the Vedas—such as Japa (repetition of holy name of the Lord), Tapa (penance and austerity), Brat/Vrat (keeping religious vows; sacred observances), Yams (self-restraint, such as continence, non-violence, not-stealing, non-possession etc.), and Niyam (certain noble practices, such as contentedness, external and internal purity, self-study and self-discipline, self-surrender to God, and so on), and so many other countless auspicious observances and practices---(10),

---As these auspicious observances and practices are like green grass that the symbolic cow (residing in his heart) grazes¹.

When well fed, milk begins to pour out of its udder when it sees its calf. Similarly, when the Jiva practices these auspicious virtues in his life, he develops piety and holiness in his heart. In other words, piety and holiness begin to ooze out from his internal being in a spontaneous way like the milk oozing out of a cow's udder when it sees its calf.² (11)

[Note—¹The cow representing faith in God is properly nourished if the Jiva practices all these noble virtues in his life. that the Jiva has brought in his heart. In other words, faith in God is fostered and its aim to free the Jiva from the entangling world is achieved in a natural way if the Jiva practices these noble virtues in his life.

If a cow is well nourished it produces good milk. The nourishing properties of milk are directly proportionate to the food that is consumed by the cow. Hence, if the Jiva practices these auspicious values, his Atma symbolically gets proper nourishment.

This is just like the case of a person drinking milk of a health cow; he benefits from good health and all round vigour. A healthy person can fight off diseases and even his enemies if his body is strong and well tuned. So likewise, practicing these noble virtues and developing these blessed characters in life, the Jiva is able to slowly empower his Atma to prepare to break free from the Granthis of Maya and Moha in due course of time.

²In this allusion, the sight and the thought of the Lord God is like the cow seeing or remembering its calf. Milk begins to ooze out of the cow's udder as soon as this happens. Likewise, a Jiva who has faith for Lord God in his heart and practices the virtues mentioned in these verses, automatically begins to have piety, holiness and devotion springing up in his heart.]

नोड़ निबृत्ति पात्र बिस्वासा । निर्मल मन अहीर निज दासा ॥ १२ ॥

nō'i nibṛtti pātra bisvāsā. nirmala mana ahīra nija dāsā. 12.

{Now, the milk of the cow is to be collected in a vessel by the person who draws it from the cow's udder.}

In order to milk the cow its hind legs are tied by a string (so that it does not kick at the bucket. Likewise, the spiritual aspirant, the Jiva, should use the auspicious virtue of renunciation and dispassion (*nibṛtti*) to tie all the wayward tendencies of his Atma, as well as to prevent it from 'kicking the bucket'¹.

Firm faith and believe in the effectiveness of all the virtues enumerated above as well as in the holiness of his own Atma and Lord God are like the bucket in which the milk of the cow is collected².

Pure and pious Mana (mind and heart; the inner-self) is like the milkman who milks this cow. Such a Mana is like one's obedient servant who is at the beck and call of its master because it would then obey what the Jiva (here meaning the Jiva's Atma) tells it to do. [Otherwise, all spiritual pursuits are useless as the Mana won't allow the Jiva to suffer hardships that must be endured if one wishes to gain something worthwhile in life.]³ (12)

[Note—¹The body of the Jiva wants self gratification and seeks pleasure and comfort from the sense objects of the world. If the Jiva begins to practice the auspicious virtues mentioned in the foregoing verse no. 10, the body tries to resist as it causes discomfort to it. Now, here the Jiva has to be firm: he must try to restrict all the wayward tendencies of his body and the Atma that would cause hindrance in his spiritual path and neutralise whatever benefits he has accumulated by diligently practicing the aforesaid virtues.

Just like the cow kicking and toppling the bucket in which the milk is being collected if its hind legs are not tied, the Jiva would also lose all the gains he has made if he fails to restrict his sense organs and the mind. Everything would come to a naught due to carelessness on his part.

²After all, if a person harbours doubts about the ability and effectiveness of any effort he is making to reach his goal, his efforts would be half-hearted and so the results would not be to the expected mark. This creates further confusion. The person believes that the path or means he had chosen were wrong, but he forgets that he had not put all his energy and effort in achieving his goal as he had been ridden by scepticism at every step of the way. How can he then expect full results? He is to blame for his misfortune, and not the path or the mean.

Similarly, if the Jiva does not have firmness of belief and faith, then all his spiritual endeavours are bound to fail and sooner or later he would go back to his old ways.

³If the servant is disobedient he will not obey his master. The master who owns the cow tells his servant, the milkman, to properly feed the cow he has brought home. Then he orders the servant, the milkman, to tie the hind legs of the cow when it is being milked. What happens? The cow is under-nourished; the milk that it produces is not to the standard; and it will kick the bucket in which the milk is being collected, thereby spilling whatever milk it produces and bringing everything to a naught to the chagrin of its owner.

Similarly, the Atma here is the real master because it is Jiva's true identity. The Mana (mind and heart) is an instrument that the Atma uses to guide the body. If the Mana won't listen to the instructions of the Atma, the result would be that the Jiva's gross body would not cooperate and sooner or later all spiritual efforts would have to be abandoned. So its very important to have an obedient Mana.]

परम धर्ममय पय दुहि भाई । अवटै अनल अकाम बनाई ॥ १३ ॥
तोष मरुत तब छमाँ जुड़ावै । धृति सम जावनु देइ जमावै ॥ १४ ॥

parama dharmamaya paya duhi bhā'ī. avaṭai anala akāma banā'ī. 13.
tōṣa maruta taba chamām̐ jurāvai. dhṛti sama jāvanu dē'i jamāvai. 14.

Oh Brother! After drawing this milk representing the best of auspicious spiritual virtues, one should now boil this milk by putting it on fire symbolised by not having any worldly desires and wishes¹. (13)

Once it is boiled, this milk should be cooled down by fanning it with the breath symbolised by auspicious virtues of 'Santosh' (contentment) and 'Kshama' (forgiveness)².

To this cooled milk is now added a little bit of curd representing fortitude, tolerance, equanimity and coolness of the mind.³ (14)

[Note—¹After the milk is drawn from the cow it must be first boiled before consumption. The fire needed to boil it here is represented by the grand virtue of having no desires related to the world. In other words, the Jiva must not expect any worldly gains by pursuing the spiritual path. Frankly speaking, this is the very reason why all the strict observations are being followed in the first place. Their aim is not at all to acquire any worldly fame and glory.

²Being contented with whatever one has, and practicing forgiveness enables a person to become calm and peaceful in the world. With limited needs and restricted desires he is contented. Even if anyone creates any obstacle in his path or takes away whatever he has, if he forgives him instead of seeking revenge, it also gives him peace and tranquillity. Both 'contentedness' and 'forgiveness' go hand-in-hand.

The word 'breath' is very significant here. When one is not contented and when he wants to take revenge, he puffs and pants, he begins to rant and curse. This is like spewing hot breath. On the other hand, if a person is contented and forgives others, his breath is cool as he is not agitated and worked-up.

³The best and the most nutritious part of a cow's milk is its clarified butter known as 'Ghee'. This Ghee is the crystalised or solidified form of the best in milk; the rest is like water. The process that is being described here is how this butter is made from milk. The virtues mentioned in this stanza are also one of the most auspicious virtues in a person. These virtues are also 'soothing and cool' in nature like the butter itself. It must be understood here that a lot of symbolism is employed to explain the underlying truth.]

मुदितौ मथै बिचार मथानी । दम आधार रजु सत्य सुबानी ॥ १५ ॥
तब मथि काढ़ि लेइ नवनीता । बिमल बिराग सुभग सुपुनीता ॥ १६ ॥

muditām^१ mathai bicāra mathānī. dama adhāra raju satya subānī. 15.
taba mathi kāḍhi lē'i navanītā. bimala birāga subhaga supunītā. 16.

Once the symbolic milk solidifies or condenses and settles in the form of curd (by the process described in the foregoing verses) in the earthen vessel represented by the virtue of “Mudita” (cheerfulness), it should now be churned using the churning-rod symbolised by “Vichar” (proper thought, analysis, contemplation and reflection). This churning-rod is fastened to a stick representing “Dama” (self-restraint, self-control and forbearance), and the string/cord used to do the actual churning is symbolised by the grand virtues of “Satya” and “Subani” (truthfulness and speaking words that are pleasing but truthful respectively)¹. (15)

[When the curd is churned, butter is the product. This ‘butter’ is being described now.] In this way, when the curd has been duly churned, one gets fresh and excellent butter that symbolises the eclectic virtue of “Vairagy²” (renunciation, detachment, dispassion etc.) (16)

[Note—¹What are the virtues that lead one to acquisition of Vairagya? They are—proper thought and reasoning, self-restraint and forbearance, and truthfulness.

Besides these, there is one more condition—and it is ‘cheerfulness’. This condition is very significant. It means that the spiritual aspirant should willingly and gladly observe all the restrictions listed in these verses. He should not treat even a single spiritual practice as something being forced on him; he should not treat them as a burden on him. It is because if a person does anything cheerfully and willingly, his heart gets involved in this exercise, and it is the heart where this symbolic cow has been kept, and it is the heart where the Atma lives too.

²In the *Holy Bible*, the importance of Vairagya is stressed in St. Matthew, 6/19-21: “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal; For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

This virtue of Vairagya is the culmination, the ‘fruit’ of all the religious observances practiced by the spiritual aspirant just like the butter which is the excellent extract of milk and represents the best qualities in a given sample of milk. If the sample of milk is adulterated with water or any other impurity, the quantity and quality of butter would be proportionately affected. Hence, the more careful, diligent and honest a person in observing the other principles of spiritual practice, the easier it becomes for him to acquire Vairagya, and the Vairagya itself would be robust and of fine quality.

The term ‘Vairagya’ means complete renunciation and detachment towards everything that is non-truth and detrimental to the creature’s spiritual wellbeing.

The Varaaha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 2, verse nos. 4 and 37 lists certain qualities which a spiritual aspirant must possess if he is to be an honest person who has actually accepted the vows of Vairagya. To quote this Upanishad—

“verse no. 4 = He should abandon all kind of attractions, attachments, infatuations, longings or a sense of belonging that he might have for anything—i.e. he should develop profound degree of renunciation as mentioned earlier in verse no. 2 above.

He should learn to exercise the greatest of restraint on his self and the organs of the gross body.

Instead, he should be firmly of the view that his true 'self' is nothing else but pure consciousness which is a mere neutral witness of everything, without getting emotionally attached with anything. That is, he should develop the noble and auspicious view that 'I am that pure immaculate cosmic Consciousness which is a neutral witness to everything in this world.' {A witness is supposed to be neutral, unemotional, detached and uninvolved in the happening. This helps him to observe things in the correct perspective and his version is regarded as authentic as opposed to biased witnesses who would see things from a pre-conceived angle and develop a tainted view of the same event. If a witness to an event is not dispassionate and neutral, then he is not worth relying; he is not a true and honest witness. Therefore, a sincere seeker of the knowledge of Brahman should, and is expected to, inculcate the great virtues of complete dispassion for, detachment with and non-involvement in the world and its affairs.} (4).

"verse no. 37 = A Vairagi (a renunciate and dispassionate person who has sacrificed his desires for worldly charms in order to attain spiritual emancipation and salvation) abandons all forms of contacts or companies with everything related to 'grossness and untruth' such as the world and the body just like a person running away from a snake or throwing one if it is caught by mistake. {That is, he is terribly scared of this contact and treats it as dangerous as the snake. He might be entangled in it till he has not become aware of the Truth, but once this awareness comes he would not lose a single moment in discarding the world and the body.}

A Vairagi desirous of sacrificing the sensual attractions of worldly charms and the overwhelming urge for sense gratification, collectively called 'Kaam' (literally lust, yearnings, lasciviousness and passions; desire for sensual gratification and enjoyments of the material world and its juicy attractions) on the altar of nobler pursuits and higher goals of life should abandon contact with a beautiful woman just like the case when people shun a rotting corpse and go away from it at a distance because of the foul and loathsome stink emanating from it.

He abandons all the sense objects of this enchanting but entrapping and deluding material world like they were horrible poison though this world is very difficult to eliminate and shun.

{That is, he would have to make conscious effort to renounce this material world. It is a difficult proposition and would require strong will and resolve.}

Chaupai line nos. 9-16 can be summarised as follows:-

"When the Lord God is merciful, he sends a holy cow symboling Satvic (virtuous, auspicious and righteous) qualities to come and reside in the heart of the creature. To wit, the creature begins to inculcate noble virtues in his inner self.

This cow feeds on green rejuvenating herbs represented by such grand qualities as Japa (repetition of holy mantras and the Lord's holy name), Tapa (observe austerity and do penance), Vrat (observe righteous vows), Yam (self-control, non-stealing, non-violence, non-possession etc.), Niyam (observing rules and regulations of a righteous way of life such as devotion and surrender to God, self-discipline, non-attachment, doing good deeds and harbouring good thoughts while keeping away from bad deeds and thoughts etc.), inculcate faith and belief in the Lord, develop renunciation and dispassion towards this mundane world of artificial sense objects, make the mind free from corruptions and negativities, and burn all tainting desires in

the fire of selfless service to the Lord. To wit, the creature begins to nourish his ill inner-self gradually with these healthy and rejuvenating virtues. Just like the cow which would produce milk according to the food she eats, the soul too develops a natural inclination based on the virtues that the creature practices in life.

The well-fed cow meets her calf denoted by newly born love and devotion for the Lord God (in the heart of the creature). Then milk begins to flow from her udders—i.e. the virtues stated earlier begin to show positive results when love and devotion for the Lord God sprouts in the heart of the spiritual aspirant.

Now the need arises to milk the cow. So quietude, serenity and poise of mind are used as cords to tie the hind legs of the cow so that she can be milked. A pot of faith is used to collect her milk, and the calmed and controlled mind acts as the person who milks her. {This is because if the mind is not focused on the process of milking the cow, the stream of milk would spill over and go to waste. In other words, a mind that is cool and calm, a mind that thinks rationally and coherently, is absolutely necessary in any endeavour, whether worldly or spiritual.}

The milk is represented by the virtue of great righteousness, auspiciousness, probity and propriety.

Then this milk is boiled properly in the fire represented by the grand virtues of dispassion, detachment, lack of desires and passions. {When the milk is boiled, all its germs are killed. Likewise, when the creature develops these virtues, all his negativities are destroyed.}

This boiled milk is then cooled down by developing the grand virtues of contentedness, forbearance and forgiveness as well as patience and restraint of the mind. {The metaphor is easy to relate to by even an ordinary man. ‘Cooling down’ is possible only when the mind is not agitated and over-reactive. Even in our day-to-day lives we tell others to ‘cool down’ when they become agitated and annoyed, and lose their temper.}

The cooling of the milk represents the cooling down of the creature’s desires, passions and all other negativities which had earlier kept him on the edge, and this obviously makes him happy and blissful.

This cooled milk should be mixed with a little bit of curd representing the virtues of patience and self-restraint of the mind and the body so that it forms into thick and rich curd representing the glorious virtues of renunciation and detachment from this mundane world.

This curd is then put in a vessel of happiness and cheerfully churned by a churning-rod representing the virtues of contemplation, wisdom, discrimination and deep thought about the reality of everything. The cord or string used to turn the rod is represented by the virtues of truthful and sweet words. This churning produces the purified form of milk in the shape of butter that represents the grand virtue of Vairagya (renunciation and detachment). To wit, the result of all this spiritual effort is the development of the virtue of renunciation and detachment in the heart of the creature.”]

दो०. जोग अग्नि करि प्रगट तब कर्म सुभासुभ लाइ ।

बुद्धि सिरावै ग्यान घृत ममता मल जरि जाइ ॥ ११७ (क) ॥

dōhā.

jōga agini kari pragaṭa taba karma subhāsubha lā'i.
bud'dhi sirāvai gyāna ghr̥ta mamatā mala jari jā'i. 117 (a).

[Now, having prepared butter symbolising Vairagya, we now learn how it is clarified to produce 'clarified butter' known as 'Ghee'.]

A fire of 'Yoga' (concentration of mind and other faculties of the body; bringing about a concerted effort to coordinate the mind and the functioning of the various organs of perception and action in the body) is then kindled.

This fire is fuelled by all the 'Karmas' (deeds) of the past, whether they are good or bad, that are burnt in it, that are consumed by it.¹

The impurity present in the butter symbolises the negative quality of 'Mamta' (affection, endearment and infatuation with the world and its material charms and things) that a Jiva has in him. This impurity is burnt, i.e. it is removed, with the help of the fire of Yoga that is used to symbolically heat the butter.²

This produces refined butter, or 'clarified butter' known as 'Ghee'. This Ghee symbolises 'Gyan' (knowledge of the truth; realisation and awareness)³.

This Gyan is then further cooled by the application of 'Buddhi' (mind and its faculty of reasoning and reflection known as intellect)⁴. (Doha no. 117-a)

[Note—¹The fire of Yoga kindled by renunciation and dispassion should help the spiritual aspirant to purify his inner self by practicing exemplary self-restraint. The past Karmas (deeds) of a person drive his thought processes, his emotions, his natural tendencies and temperament, his likes and dislikes, as well as his reaction to different situations in his current life. Yoga means to coordinate and bring about a union between two or more things. So, the wise spiritual aspirant coordinates all his efforts to neutralise the different inherent tendencies etc. that he has inherited from his past in order to stabilise himself internally, both at the intellectual level as well as the emotional level. Neither the adversities of the world, the miseries and pains of the world, nor its charms and glamour are able to sway the spiritual aspirant who practices Yoga in the proper way from his chosen path.

²We have already read earlier in the preceding verse no. 16 that this 'butter' itself stands for the great virtue of Vairagya (renunciation). But Vairagya needs to be pure, and not corrupted or diluted with certain taints, and one such factor is 'Mamta' for the world as defined above. So this negativity has to be eliminated to bring the shine out in Vairagya. How is it done? It is done by the means of practicing 'Yoga'.

³In the Upanishads it is affirmed that the result of practicing Yoga is attainment of 'self-realisation' or Gyan. It is a powerful and potent tool that helps the practitioner to clean his self by burning all the spiritual negativities related to the world that cling to him and cloud his inner self in an imperceptible manner. The cleansing process is both external as well as internal. Yoga helps to clog all the nerves and veins in the body and rejuvenate it—this is external cleaning. It helps one to concentrate his mind and focus it on the goal of life. For spiritual aspirants, Yoga helps them to keep their mind under control, to focus its attention on the truth represented by the pure conscious Atma and wean it away from the falsehood of the world, which in turn helps the practitioner to realise his 'true self and its potentials'—this is internal awakening.

Once the thick layer of impurities represented by countless negative factors such as Moha, Maya, Trishna etc. that have been listed in the foregoing verses are removed

by the practice of Yoga and other observances, the ‘self’ becomes freshened just like a man’s physical body is washed clean of all the dirt that covers it after he bathes, or gets freshened up.

But that is not enough. A man who has just taken a bath is able to clean his body, but if his mind is engulfed in some sort of worries and is torn in dilemmas, can he actually feels fresh and rejuvenated for a sustained period of time by simply taking a bath? Of course not. He needs a calm and poised mind.

Let us understand it by an example. Suppose a man had some great worry weighing on his mind the previous day, and he went to sleep in great depression, his mind heavy and gloomy. He wakes up the next day and takes a bath. He feels energised for a while. But the gloomy thoughts soon overtake him. On the contrary, if he has learnt to exercise control over his mind and emotions, then not only will he feel fresh with a physical bath but would be ready to tackle all the problems with the help of his intellect which is ready to guide him onwards. Surely he will find a way, and even if he doesn’t he still finds peace in his heart and overcome his miseries because he knows the saying that “even this will pass away”, that not everything in life can go according to one’s wish, that the world is a continuous graph of up and down curves in life. So he takes it easy and everything in his stride.

⁴Buddhi or intellect may work in different ways depending upon many factors that come into play. If the intellect is corrupted or polluted by any factor, the person’s decisions and thought processes get distorted to the same extent. So, inspite of realising the false nature of the gross world and that it is like a trap for the Atma, inspite of practicing all the spiritual principles and having developed renunciation towards the world by the knowledge acquired by the study of the scriptures and experienced by spiritual practices, if a person still has a soft corner in his inner heart for the world and its false relationships, thinking that someone is his son or friend, that some or the other thing of the material world belongs to him or had belonged to him some time ago, that he has at least moral right over them, and such other factors that even remotely ties the Jiva to the world—then he cannot be said to have complete and purest form of Vairagya.

Hence, it is necessary to break this know of attachment and affection with the world—i.e. it is imperative to overcome ‘Mamta’.

Once Mamta is done away with, a purified ‘Buddhi’ (intellect) emerges. When this cleansed intellect gives certain advice to the spiritual aspirant, it is a well-considered and expert advice without any extraneous considerations that influence it. It is like the case of a king’s close advisor who is wise and loyal to the king, who gives the best advice to the king that is in the latter’s as well as in the kingdom’s interest. On the contrary, if the king’s advisor is corrupt and under the influence of some one with vested interest, his advice to the king would be distorted and insincere. The poor king depends upon the advisor, not realising that the latter is corrupt. This will be ruinous for the king.

Likewise, the Jiva and his Atma rely on the Buddhi (intellect) to guide them along, and if the Buddhi is corrupted by Mamta (affection and infatuation) for the world, then no matter how hard the Jiva and his Atma have tried to break free from their ‘Granthis’ or spiritual knots, their efforts would be made null and void by their corrupted advisor, the Buddhi.]

तब बिग्यानरूपिनी बुद्धि बिसद घृत पाइ ।

चित्त दिआ भरि धरै दृढ़ समता दिअटि बनाइ ॥ ११७ (ख) ॥

taba bigyānarūpinī bud'dhi bisada ghr̥ta pā'i.

citta di'ā bhari dharai dr̥ha samatā di'aṭi banā'i. 117 (b).

This Buddhi (the intelligent mind which has been freed from all taints and corruptions) is like 'Vigyan' or 'refined intellect'. [That is, it is not sufficient to simply have 'Buddhi' or mind and intellect, but it is more important to have a Buddhi that is refined, that is sharp and of a higher order. Such a Buddhi is known as 'Vigyan'—i.e. a refined intellect that has razor sharp reasoning and ability to analyse things in the correct perspective.]

Thus, the clarified butter known as 'Ghee' that is obtained (by the method outlined in the foregoing verses) symbolises refined 'Buddhi' (mind) known as 'Vigyan' (refined intellect).¹

This symbolic Ghee (clarified butter) is then filled in the symbolic lamp called 'Chitta' (sub conscious mind and faculty of reasoning of the mind).

This lamp is then put on a stand symbolised by the virtues of stability, equanimity, equality and evenness of mind and thought². {If this is not done, the lamp has a chance of toppling over. This means all efforts to light the surroundings will fail as the light of the lamp will go off when it topples over due to the unsteady lamp-stand on which it is kept.} (Doha no. 117-b)

[Note—¹This Doha no. 117-b distinguishes between 'Buddhi' and 'Vigyan'. While the term 'Buddhi' refers to the mind in its basic form with crude intellect, the word 'Vigyan' refers to the refined mind with its refined intellect, a mind that has the ability to do reasoning based on analysis of things in the correct light and perspective, and not a mind that is biased against or in favour of something. Vigyan refers to the reasoning that relies on a mind without any preconceived ideas and notions, a mind that is analytical, prudent, wise and practical.

In other words, the result of practicing Yoga and other spiritual disciplines is to have wisdom and enlightenment. If this is not achieved, the entire exercise is futile. That empirical body of knowledge which stands the test of proof and verification; scientific and logical form of wisdom and relevant knowledge is called Vigyan. When ordinary 'Gyan' is put to test and a rational body of knowledge is arrived at, when it is witnessed or experienced in practical terms, it is known as 'Vigyan'. It is logical derivation, confirmation and affirmation of certain things known in theory and now ratified as the unequivocal truth and the irrefutable fact, reasoned acknowledgement, or actual witness of facts so that there is no doubt or confusion as to their authenticity, veracity and truth. In other words, Vigyan is experimental Gyan, or Gyan put to practice by following the guidelines of Vedant. It is knowledge that can be empirically proved and logically and intelligently applied [See Adhyatma Ramayan, Aranya Kand, Canto 4, verse no.38-39.]

'Vigyan' literally means in-depth knowledge of something that comes with analysis of given data by the application of mind, intelligence and rational logic; having in-depth knowledge of any subject; intelligent and rational learning or science of anything which can be verified and applied in practice; any body of knowledge which is empirical, rational, logical, scientific and applicable in practice. Vigyan is the wisdom, erudition and intelligence that is inherent in a man. It is the rational mind

that decides what is to be remembered, what is to be thought of, what needs attention and concentration of mind, and what is worthy of paying any attention and thought at all in the first place. This selective aspect of the discriminatory intellect is called Vigyan.

Any body of knowledge is called Vigyan because it is verifiable and derived at by application of intellect and mind free from any pre-conceived notions and beliefs. Consciousness is called Vigyan because it is self-sustained, self-enlightened, self-illuminated, radiant and glorious; it is a fount of genuine and empirical knowledge and awareness, of wisdom and enlightenment. All other entities in this creation have whatever they have because of the potentials and powers bestowed to them by this consciousness. Their very relevance and importance and significance are there because the consciousness has given them this privilege. These entities are nothing else but a marvelous display of the magnificent majesty and potentials of the consciousness. This realisation is called Vigyan because it is based on intelligent and rational application of knowledge and wisdom. It is Vigyan because it is empirical and thoughtful; it is rational and logical; it is truthful, genuine and real. Vigyan refers to a superior body knowledge that is not based on hearsay or conjectures. It has a solid foundation and steady relevance.

Information and knowledge that stand the test of logic and rational is therefore called Vigyan; it is this Vigyan that takes a man forward. With knowledge come joy and happiness, satisfaction and a sense of achievement, elation and a sense of fulfillment. In the spiritual realm, this leads to bliss and self-realisation. This realisation pertains to the awareness of the 'self' as the irrefutable, eternal and immutable Atma or soul which is pure consciousness. The macrocosmic counterpart of this individual Atma is known as Brahm. Hence, self-realisation is equivalent to Brahm realisation.

Consciousness itself implies the truthful knowledge of anything that is real and true, and not that is hypothetical and imaginary. That is why the Atma or soul is called consciousness and a personification of Vigyan.

Purely on technical grounds, the word 'Gyan' means gnosis, while 'Vigyan' may refer to enlightenment, but in practice both go hand in hand.

Besides this, Vigyan is the progenitor, sustainer and concluder of the entire creation. It is obvious deduction because creation is such a complicated process that it requires exceptional intelligence and skills as well as critical ability to use available information to start, sustain and conclude the tremendous explosive potentials of the forces and energy of Nature for constructive purposes, and to keep a strict tab on it so that it does not digress from its mandate and prove counter-productive. Even during the life of a creature, it needs the help from all fields of knowledge in order to meet its daily needs and provide for its material and bodily comforts and well being.

Information and knowledge that stand the test of logic and rationale is called Vigyan; it is this Vigyan that takes a man forward. With knowledge come joy and happiness, satisfaction and a sense of achievement, elation and a sense of fulfillment. In the spiritual realm, this leads to bliss and self-realisation. This realisation pertains to the awareness of the irrefutable and immutable Atma or soul which is consciousness. The macrocosmic counterpart of this individual Atma is known as Brahm. Hence, self-realisation is equivalent to Brahm-realisation.

In short, from conception right up to conclusion creation needs Vigyan at each step of its existence. At the time of death, a wise man benefits from his lifetime of experiences and learning, and detaches himself from this delusory and illusionary world of material objects which are non-eternal and the cause of all miseries because

they tend to tie and bog the Atma down to this lowly world of transmigration and prevent its final liberation and attainment of salvation.”

The concept of Vigyan has been elaborately described in (i) Sam Veda's Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 7, section 7; (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda's Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 31 and Canto 6, verse no. 68; Taittiriya Upanishad, Valli 3, Anuvak 5; and Panch Brahm Upanishad, verse nos. 35-39.

Vigyan is defined as an analytical and systematic understanding of anything, a critical study so that the truth hidden behind the external appearances is unraveled and known.]

तीनि अवस्था तीनि गुन तेहि कपास तें काढि ।

तूल तुरीय सँवारि पुनि बाती करै सुगाढ़ि ॥ ११७ (ग) ॥

tīni avasthā tīni guna tēhi kapāsa tēm kāḍhi.

tūla turiya samvāri puni bātī karai sugāḍhi. 117 (c).

{This Doha describes how the symbolic wick of the lamp is to be made. Remember: It is the wick that bears the flame; without the wick there will be no light. If light stands for spiritual wisdom and enlightenment, then it is very important to have a well-made wick that would sustain this light.}

To make the wick for the lamp, cotton is needed. This ‘wick’ is symbolised by the transcendental state of existence known as ‘Turiya’, and it is extracted or obtained from a ‘ball of cotton’ consisting of the other three states of existence known as Jagrat, Swapna and Sushupta, as well as the three Gunas known as Sata, Raja and Tama.¹ (Doha no. 117-c)

[Note—¹The ‘wick’ stands erect as opposed to the ‘ball of cotton’. If the fire is applied to the ball of cotton, the latter would burn immediately, but the same fire does not harm the wick but rides on its back.

In other words, the countless temptations and corruptions of the world can easily affect a person while his Atma lives in the three states of existence known as Jagrat, Swapna and Sushupta, or when it is affected by the three Gunas of Sata, Raja and Tama. On the contrary, if the Atma rises above these two combinations of three factors each, then it stands tall and incorruptible. Even the ferocity of the fire can't burn it.

According to metaphysics, there are four states of existence of consciousness. They are known as (i) Jagrat of waking state; (ii) Swapna or dreaming state; (iii) Sushupta or deep sleep state; and (iv) Turiya or the post deep sleep state which is a transcendental state of existence. Beyond this fourth state is the fifth state known as Turiyateet.

Similarly, there are said to be three Gunas or inherent qualities in all living beings which decide each individual's personality and mentality according to the ratio in which they are present in that individual.]

सो०. एहि बिधि लेसै दीप तेज रासि बिग्यानमय ।

जातहिं जासु समीप जरहिं मदादिक सलभ सब ॥ ११७ (घ) ॥

sōraṭhā.

ēhi bidhi lēsai dīpa tēja rāsi bigyānamaya.

jātaḥiṁ jāsu samīpa jarahiṁ madādika salabha saba. 117 (d).

In the above described way, a wise, erudite and sagacious spiritual aspirant should light the lamp of true knowledge and wisdom from which emanates the brilliant light of enlightenment and self-realisation that is able to immediately burn or destroy all the moths symbolising all sorts of worldly taints such as vanity, ego, haughtiness and arrogance (jarahiṁ madādika salabha saba) that happen to go near him¹. (Sortha no. 117-d)

[Note—¹Doha nos. 117-c and 117-d can be recapitulated as follows:-

“When all Mamta (affections and attachments for the world and its material charms) is done away with, the Jiva is said to have accessed Gyan (wisdom and enlightenment). Slowly when Gyan becomes robust and healthy, the Jiva attains true Vigyan, the higher echelons of enlightenment. This in metaphysical terms means that he enhances his spiritual stature step by step to ultimately attain the state of Turiya, i.e. the state of transcendental existence in which the Jiva lives as pure consciousness that is free from worldly taints and grossness.”]

चौ०. सोहमस्मि इति बृत्ति अखंडा । दीप सिखा सोइ परम प्रचंडा ॥ १ ॥

आतम अनुभव सुख सुप्रकासा । तब भव मूल भेद भ्रम नासा ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

sōhamasmi iti bṛtti akhaṇḍā. dīpa sikhā sō'i parama pracandā. 1.

ātama anubhava sukha suprakāsā. taba bhava mūla bhēda bhrama nāsā. 2.

The constant awareness of, and a firm conviction in, the truthfulness of the spiritual wisdom that ‘I am That (Brahm) (sōhamasmi—i.e. there is no distinction between ‘my true self’ which is called my Atma and which is pure consciousness, and Brahm which is the cosmic Consciousness and the ‘Supreme Self’ or the Parmatma of creation) represents the steady and unflickering, dazzling flame of the lamp of wisdom, enlightenment and self-realisation. (1)

In this way, when the light of self-realisation illuminates one’s inner-self, the darkness symbolising doubts and delusions originating from this gross world of duality would automatically vanish¹. (2)

[Note—¹“The constant thought that ‘I and Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness and the Supreme Being known as the Parmatma, are one and non-dual’ represents the light that is brightly lit and emanating from the lamp described above. When this light of self-realisation spreads in the space of the inner-self of the spiritual aspirant, it is only then the darkness represented by Avidya (lack of truthful and correct knowledge; ignorance about the reality) and Moha (infatuations and attachments with this artificial world of delusions) that create the mirage (impression) of ‘duality’ in this world, is eliminated.”]

Ghosts and phantoms terrify a person in a dark house, but all such fears vanish if there is constant illumination from a brilliant source of light from a lamp. Likewise, when the light of self-realisation illuminates the inner-self of a creature, the spiritual fears arising out of delusions pertaining to the world do not bother him.

Darkness and illumination cannot co-exist. All perennial doubts and confusions, called various kinds of delusions, pertaining to the reality of existence and the truth of life, about what should be one's real goal in life, about why one never gets permanent peace and happiness by searching them in the external world and how true peace and comfort can be obtained, about the true identity of one's own self, whether it is one's physical body that lives and gets involved in the affairs of the world or is it something else that is separate from the body and hence detached from the world, about why there is so much discord and opposition amongst the creatures of this world, about how to overcome temptations of caused by the false charms of the material world and its sense objects, and many other such spiritual queries that perplex a creature are answered once he becomes enlightened about the basic truth about himself and existence.

This Truth is “sōhamasmi” which is one of the main ‘Mahavakyas’ or great spiritual sayings, the maxims and axioms of the Upanishads. It simply means that ‘there is no distinction between the individual's true self known as the Atma that is pure consciousness and the essence of his being, and the supreme Brahm which is the supreme Atma of creation known as the cosmic Consciousness, and which is the essence of life in this creation’. To wit, the ‘individual living being’ is a microcosmic form of the ‘supreme Being’.

One very essential point to note here is that this wisdom is also called ‘self-realisation’ as one is able to become enlightened about who actually one is. He realises that his ‘true self’ is not his gross physical body which interacts with the world and established relations with its units, but it is the independent Atma. And this Atma is a universal and all-pervading entity that is the same constant denominator in all living beings.

Further, a wise aspirant realises that it is his gross body that does deeds and acts in various ways in this equally gross world, it is this body that suffers or enjoys the consequences of what it does, it is the body that takes birth, grows up and becomes old to die one day, whereas the Atma is an eternal and uniform entity the remains detached from all deeds and therefore immune to all the consequences arising due to these deeds, it neither takes any birth nor dies for it only changes bodies like one changes one's old clothes to don new ones, and that the Atma is never affected by any of the grossness, faults and taints associated with the mortal world. Whereas the body may feel shortages, misery and pain, the Atma is eternally blissful and contented.

A simple corollary of this wisdom is that the spiritual aspirant is able to understand the truth of the statement that ‘that Lord Ram resides in the subtle heart of his devotees’. This is because Lord Ram is a personified form or an embodiment of the cosmic Consciousness which is also known as the Supreme Atma or Brahm, and this Atma lives inside the subtle heart of all living beings as their own Atma. By saying that the Lord resides in the subtle heart of ‘his devotees’ it is meant that only those who are self-realised and enlightened about the truth of the wisdom “It is Me/I” and firmly believe in it (i.e. the devotees) are the ones who would understand that Lord Ram lives inside their own inner-self as their Atma in the same way as he exists outside.

Therefore, true worship is to be done internally and not externally. This is the principle of ‘non-duality’ or non-distinction between the self and the supreme Self. Hence, a truly self-realised devotee of Lord Ram becomes a living image of the Lord himself!

For the rest of the creatures, i.e. for those who are not enlightened or ‘true devotees’ as they have not realised the truth of the statement “sōhamasmi”, Lord Ram is a revered deity who needs to be offered worship by so many external ways to please him, and is the Lord who has to be attained by undertaking so many strenuous religious exercises that are characterised by a constant fear of failure and hardships.

Obviously, those who do not believe in “sōhamasmi” cannot find the same level of peace and fulfilment as has been obtained by those who believe in it.]

प्रबल अबिद्या कर परिवारा । मोह आदि तम मिटइ अपारा ॥ ३ ॥

तब सोइ बुद्धि पाइ उँजिआरा । उर गृहँ बैठि ग्रंथि निरुआरा ॥ ४ ॥

prabala abidyā kara parivārā. mōha ādi tama miṭa'i apārā. 3.

taba sō'i bud'dhi pā'i um̐ji'ārā. ura gr̥ham̐ baiṭhi granthi niru'ārā. 4.

With the illumination arising out of self-realisation, the darkness that is associated with the various spiritual faults having their genesis in the powerful forces of ignorance and delusions that create attraction for and infatuation with the gross world (mōha ādi tama) is automatically eliminated. These spiritual faults or shortcomings are not isolated ones but they come in hordes like a family of problems that invade the inner-self of an individual and rob him of all his peace and happiness¹. (3)

When this happens (i.e. when the darkness of ignorance and delusion is removed and fear from the ghosts and phantoms symbolising numerous spiritual faults vanishes), the wisened and polished intellect called ‘Buddhi’ can sit quietly and analytically examine the differences or similarities between the gross and the sublime, between the reality and the falsehood in this world, under the light provided by wisdom of self-realisation, and this helps the Buddhi to untie or unravel the mysteries of all spiritual knots (that had been hitherto worrying the aspirant)². (4)

[Note—¹Refer to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 70—to Doha no. 71-a which describes the family symbolising the evil effects of Kaliyug.

²“In the light of enlightenment and self-realisation, the wisdom and the intellect are able to see or search out the cause of the knot that had tied the creature to this world, and thereby untie the knot, setting the creature free. With the light of enlightenment and self-realisation, the creature is able to see the root cause of his worldly entanglements and entrapments. These causes are enumerated above in the foregoing verses. Once the cause is known, it becomes easy to untie the knot. Previously it was not possible because the spiritual aspirant couldn’t see them in the darkness of ignorance and delusions.”

It is impossible to read or see anything in the dark; a man needs light to do so. A person cannot untie a knot in the dark.

Similarly, if the intellect is clouded by delusions and ignorance then it is not able to properly analyse anything about the existence and its truth, about the causes for the creature's pain and sufferings or happiness and joys. When this cloud is removed then only can it solve this riddle by calmly analysing the data available to it by the creature's own experiences in life in this world.

So therefore, when the light of self-realisation illuminates the inner-self of a spiritual aspirant, and all darkness associated with delusions and ignorance is removed, the Buddhi or the intellect of a person is able to peacefully analyse the world and one's experiences in it. It is then able to unravel the mysteries of life's joys and sorrows, what gives true and sustainable happiness to the creature, and what the causes of his miseries and grief are.

The Buddhi free from the darkness of ignorance and delusions can see properly in the light of true knowledge and wisdom that comes with self-realisation, and this illumination helps it to untie the knot that had confounded the spiritual aspirant about his true self and the reality of existence, as well as about the real source of joy and happiness. The wisened Buddhi helps the aspirant to realise that it makes no sense to be attached with the gross characterised by grief and miseries, and that true happiness and bliss lies elsewhere. When a person himself realises any truth based on his personal experiences he is more inclined to believe in it and be steady in following it as compared to the situation when he hears or reads about the same truth from other sources.]

छोरन ग्रंथि पाव जौं सोई । तब यह जीव कृतारथ होई ॥ ५ ॥

छोरत ग्रंथि जानि खगराया । बिघ्न अनेक करइ तब माया ॥ ६ ॥

chōrana granthi pāva jaur̥m sō'ī. taba yaha jīva kṛtāratha hō'ī. 5.

chōrata granthi jāni khagarāyā. bighna anēka kara'i taba māyā. 6.

If the wisened intellect, the Buddhi, is able to untie the knot of ignorance and delusion, the Jiva (living being) feels glad and fulfilled as it can now hope to realise its spiritual objectives. (5)

But oh the King of Birds (khagarāyā)! The problem is that when Maya (delusions personified) finds that its family members are being chased out of the inner chambers of the heart, it does its best to throw a spanner in the wheel by creating hindrances and making a lot of trouble¹. (6)

[Note—¹As soon as the Buddhi is able to untie the knot of ignorance, the Jiva is full of gratitude. But Maya (the power of delusions) is extremely cunning; as soon as it finds that the Jiva is about to break free, it starts creating countless mischief for him.]

रिद्धि सिद्धि प्रेरइ बहु भाई । बुद्धिहि लोभ दिखावहि आई ॥ ७ ॥

कल बल छल करि जाहिं समीपा । अंचल बात बुझावहि दीपा ॥ ८ ॥

rid'dhi sid'dhi prēra'i bahu bhā'ī. bud'dhihi lōbha dikhāvahiṁ ā'ī. 7.
kala bala chala kari jāhiṁ samīpā. aṅcala bāta bujhāvahiṁ dīpā. 8.

Oh Brother (bhā'ī)¹! It (the 'Maya') sends many types of 'Riddhis and Siddhis' (temptations and rewards pertaining to the gratification of the senses and material benefits of the world) that try to distract the Buddhi and provoke it to become greedy for the rewards that they dangle before it like a bait. (7)

These Ridhis and Siddhis come in surreptitiously; they adopt all the tricks they know of, using cunning, deceit, conceit, force and fraud to gain entry. Then they approach the Buddhi and extinguish the light of true knowledge and wisdom by fanning the lamp with the end of their garments². (8)

[Note—¹The word 'Bhai' or 'Brother' implies that all the creatures are members of the same family of which the Supreme Being is the Father. This is the way a genuinely self-realised person would address another because he knows that the true identity of both of them is their Atma or soul, and this entity is pure consciousness that is constant, unchanging, universal, and the same in all living beings. The gross bodies of two individuals are different, but their Atma is the same.

'Bhai' is also an affectionate means of address that establishes proximity between the speaker and the listener. Here Kaagbhusund stresses that he has great affection for Garud.

It also means that though Garud is the king of birds', yet when he has come to listen to the glorious story of Lord Ram he is like other ordinary birds who are sitting around to listen to the narration.

²Maya's family consisting of various temptations and rewards come disguised in the form of symbolic whores who are charming and voluptuous by nature. In order to entice the Buddhi to fall in their evil trap, they gesture at it they they would like to tightly embrace it in a warm sensual hug only if they are allowed to put out the light emanating from the lamp of wisdom and enlightenment. So, if the Buddhi is not careful and alert, and if it slips from its chosen path, then the light is shut-off and darkness engulfs the Buddhi once again. If this comes to happen, then all the earlier efforts of the Jiva to get out of the clutches of delusions and ignorance come to a naught.

"Maya sends many temptations in the form of 'Riddhis and Siddhis'—i.e. worldly acclaim, riches, successes and achievements, as well as many mystical powers that make a creature proud of his spiritual achievements and prowess, thereby making him egoistic, proud, haughty and arrogant. They come close to the Jiva by cunning artifice, by hook or by crook, i.e. they employ all cunning and deceitful means, all types of fraud and force at their disposal to deceive the creature and entice him with temptations so that he gets trapped once again. The Maya sways the end of her colourful garment to fan the lamp so that the light of Gyan, Vigyan and Vairagya that had been lit with such diligent effort is put off. This is exactly what Maya wants; she throws the bait and the creature bites it like a greedy fish, a bird and a monkey cited in the beginning of this narrative. Though on the verge of freedom, the creature gets trapped once again; the light is shut off, and darkness takes hold!"

होइ बुद्धि जौं परम सयानी । तिन्ह तन चितव न अनहित जानी ॥ ९ ॥
जौं तेहि बिघ्न बुद्धि नहिं बाधी । तौ बहोरि सुर करहिं उपाधी ॥ १० ॥

hō'i bud'dhi jaum parama sayānī. tinha tana citava na anahita jānī. 9.
jaum tēhi bighna bud'dhi nahim bādhī. tau bahōri sura karahim upādhī. 10.

Now, if the Buddhi (representing the wisdom of the Jiva, the living being) is wise and clever, it would see through the nefarious design of the crooked Maya and its messengers, the Riddhis and Siddhis, that have to come to entice it. The Buddhi would realise that they are harmful to its own interest, and so it pays no attention to their overtures; it pays no heed to them and neglects them. (9)

In this way if the Buddhi is able to overcome the hurdles created by its enemy symbolised by the various forms of Maya, then the next obstacle in its spiritual progress is created by the (jealous and selfish) gods who step in to create another sort of problem (sura karahim upādhī)¹. (10)

[Note—¹“But if the Jiva creature is wise and intelligent, he immediately realises the mischief and evil design being played out by this cunning intruder. So he uses the weapon of his intellect to vanquish Maya and retain his ground of self-realisation and enlightenment, thereby being able to retain all the wonderful virtues he has acquired and fostered with such great difficulties. This is first hurdle crossed or overcome. The next obstacle is caused by jealous gods.”

According to the Aeterya Upanishad of the Rig Veda, Canto 1, Sections 1 and 2, when creation came into being and the living being, the Jiva or creature was created, the different ‘gods’ who represent the different dynamic forces of creation took up their residences in the different organs of the creature’s body. They began to live inside the body of the individual Jiva as it was a microcosmic form of the universe in which the gods used to live. Once they took up their dwelling inside the body of the Jiva, they started controlling his functioning by controlling each of his individual organs of perception and action.

For instance, the ‘god’ who represents the power to ‘see’ took up his residence in the creature’s ‘eyes’. From here this ‘god’ controlled what the creature ‘saw’. Since the mind and sub-conscious rely on the different organs of perception to receive any kind of information pertaining to the external world in which the creature lives so as to decide the course of action that the creature would take, what feedback these organs give to the mind and the sub-conscious would directly affect the decision-making process of the creature and the way it acts in this world.

Thus, even if the mind is pure and un-corrupt as an individual entity, even if the mind alone is wise and enlightened enough to understand the bad effects of Maya vis-à-vis the creature’s spiritual welfare, but when it has to rely on other factors for taking any decision while dealing with the world in which the creature (the Jiva; the living being) has to live as long as the latter has a physical body, the mind is bound to be affected by the information that these organs provide it. These organs are controlled by different ‘gods’, such as the organ of sight known as the ‘eye’ is controlled by the ‘god of sight’; the ‘nose’ is presided over by the ‘god who controls smell’, and so on.

The mind therefore would be indirectly influenced by the gods who control the different organs of perception and action in the creature’s body. If the gods decide to

play cunning tricks and ruin the fate of the otherwise wise, self-realised and enlightened creature, they would tweak and corrupt the information that the relevant organs would pass onto the mind. Since the mind gets a corrupted and tainted form of feedback from the organs of perception and action because the gods presiding over them are crooked and selfish, it (the mind) takes a wrong decision on behalf of the creature. The result is that the innocent creature unwittingly falls in a trap of temptations pertaining to the world and its sense objects, and also becomes a victim of the vicious pull that the sense organs exert on him for self-gratification.

Put simply, if the Jiva is careless and puts down his guard even after he has managed to train his mind and sub-conscious to be spiritually wise and enlightened, there is a grave risk of falling from his chosen path because his own organs betray him and make it difficult for him to maintain his peace.

That is why even ‘Gyanis’, i.e. those who are highly wise, self-realised and enlightened, those who have acquired true knowledge and are aware of the spiritual truth, are prone to fall from their exalted position and lose their high moral stature. It is because though they have fully controlled their mind yet they aren’t able to control their sense organs. They talk to others about spirituality, about the futile nature of this gross mortal world, and about the value of renunciation, detachment and dispassion, but they themselves don’t follow what they preach; they themselves remain neck-deep in worldly affairs and long for worldly things.

What Kaagbhusund means here is that even when the Jiva manages to use his intelligent mind to deflect the effects of Maya, these so-called ‘gods’ take over to trouble him. To wit, even if the Jiva is able to resist the evil effects of delusions and ignorance by acquiring true knowledge and wisdom, the sense organs of perception and action begin to play their own tricks upon him. They join hands to pull the Jiva towards the gross world and its sense objects like a number of iron pieces are pulled towards a strong magnet. This idea is elaborated in the next verses.]

इंद्री द्वार झरोखा नाना । तहँ तहँ सुर बैठे करि थाना ॥ ११ ॥

आवत देखिहिं बिषय बयारी । ते हठि देहिं कपाट उघारी ॥ १२ ॥

indrī dvāra jharōkhā nānā. taḥam̐ taḥam̐ sura baiṭhē kari thānā. 11.

āvata dēkhahim̐ biṣaya bayārī. tē haṭhi dēhim̐ kapāṭa ughārī. 12.

The Jiva’s home (i.e. the Atma’s abode) is represented by the subtle heart. [The true identity, the true ‘self’ of a Jiva is his Atma or soul which is pure consciousness. This Atma lives in the subtle space of the Jiva’s heart. Hence, the real abode or home of the Jiva is his subtle ‘heart’.]¹

This home has many openings or outlets (windows and doors) symbolised by the different organs of perception and action present in the physical gross body of the Jiva². In each of these openings there sits a god who guards it; each of these organs are the exclusive domain of a particular god who presides over its functioning. (11)

As soon as they observe that the wind of worldly attachments and infatuation (or sensuality) is coming towards the Jiva, they forcibly open the door and window to let it in³. (12)

[Note—¹The Atma or the soul that lives in the heart of an individual sees the outside world through the means of windows represented by the sense organs of the body. These organs have a patron god of their own. These jealous gods sit at the doorway of their respective sense organs, i.e. they control the five organs of perception and the five organs of action. So as soon as they find that the creature has used the weapon of the Buddhi (intellect) to defeat Maya, these gods open the door of the sense organs and allow Maya to enter by the back-door method in the form of attractions for the charms presented by the sense objects of the material world. To wit, if the wise creature is not fooled by Maya directly and prevents himself from falling prey to temptations created by it, the gods take over. In other words, the sense organs through which the living being interacts with the world begin to lure him to their respective objects in the outside world. Herein comes the 'need for self control, and the necessity of self restraint of the body and its organs.

²There are five organs of perception and five organs of action. Eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin are the organs of perception, and hands, legs, mouth, genitals and excretory are the organs of action. According to Katho-panishad, Canto 2, Valli 2, verse no. 1, there are eleven doors of the body. They are the following—two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, one mouth, navel, anus, genitals and Brahm-randhra which is the hair like slit on the top of the head.

³To wit, the creature finds it almost impossible to resist the temptations of the world and the charms of its material things inspite of the fact that the mind knows that they are ruinous for his welfare. It is just like the case when all the windows and doors of a house are pushed open under the force of the strong wind that accompanies a storm when it hits the building if these windows and doors are not previously shut tight and fastened properly.]

जब सो प्रभंजन उर गृहँ जाई । तबहिं दीप बिग्यान बुझाई ॥ १३ ॥

ग्रंथि न छूटि मिटा सो प्रकासा । बुद्धि बिकल भइ बिषय बतासा ॥ १४ ॥

jaba sō prabhanjāna ura gr̥ham' jā'ī. tabahim̐ dīpa bigyāna bujhā'ī. 13.
granthi na chūṭi miṭā sō prakāsā. bud'dhi bikala bha'i biṣaya batāsā. 14.

As soon as this strong gust of wind symbolising desires, wants, passions and lusts related to the sense organs and the world of material things manages to enter the heart, it instantly blows out the lamp of wisdom and enlightenment¹. (13)

As a result, on the one hand he is able to untie the knot of delusions and ignorance, and on the other hand the lamp of wisdom and erudition also gets extinguished. In the ensuing darkness, his Buddhi becomes sore bewildered and utterly confused. This leaves the Jiva entangled in a web of spiritual miseries and torments, and grappling and groping in complete spiritual darkness. (14)

[Note—¹As soon as the creature allows himself to be a prey to the temptations of the world and the urges of the sense organs for self-gratification, he loses his mental balance and falls for the trap.

As soon as this wind of worldly charms and attractions enter the heart through the door of the sense organs, it blows off the light of Vigyan (wisdom, enlightenment and self-realisation that had led to renunciation, dispassion and detachment) that had been lit (kindled, developed and nurtured for so long) in the heart (inner-self) of the unfortunate creature. Neither is the knot untied, nor is the light of Vigyan allowed to remain lighted. Darkness once again prevails in the heart, and the strong gust of wind representing attractions and charms of the material sense objects of the world begins to make the Buddhi (intellect) confused and restless.”]

इंद्रिन्ह सुरन्ह न ग्यान सोहाई । बिषय भोग पर प्रीति सदाई ॥ १५ ॥
बिषय समीर बुद्धि कृत भोरी । तेहि बिधि दीप को बार बहोरी ॥ १६ ॥

indrinha suranha na gyāna sōhā'ī. biṣaya bhōga para prīti sadā'ī. 15.
biṣaya samīra bud'dhi kṛta bhōrī. tēhi bidhi dīpa kō bāra bahōrī. 16.

The sense organs and their presiding gods have an innate hate for Gyan (spiritual wisdom and its attendant virtues of renunciation, detachment, dispassion etc.) because they like enjoying the sensual pleasures and physical comforts (biṣaya bhōga) that are obtained from the sense objects and the gross material things of the world. (15)

The situation is made all the more grave and serious for the creature because even his Buddhi (which could have guarded the creature from falling prey to evil tendencies) has been blinded due to the darkness created by the strong gust of wind symbolising worldly charms and temptations that has managed to blow out the light of the lamp of spiritual wisdom and true knowledge which had been illuminating the inner-self of the creature earlier. [In complete darkness, the creature stumbles and falls repeatedly until he lays prostrate on the ground, injured and wailing. He is unable to get up and find a way out of his predicament. When the mind fails to make the correct decision because it is bombarded by wrong information input from the organs of perception and action, the creature is misled and takes the wrong turn in his life.]¹ (16)

[Note—¹The presiding gods of the sense organs do not like Gyan. The sense organs prefer indulgences in the respective objects in this material world; this is their natural habit. They do not like being restrained and put on leash; they feel suffocated and strangulated. It is like the case of the restless horse which never stands quietly, and is ever anxious to canter away at the first opportunity. Meanwhile, the Buddhi too have been reeling under the impact of Maya that has blown in by the back-door. Say, in this situation, who can light the blown-out lamp again? It is a very precarious condition for the Jiva. There seems to be no hope for him now.

The main idea here is that it is very important for a wise spiritual aspirant to practice self-control over his sense organs as much as it is important for him to inculcate wisdom and excellent virtues, to acquire true knowledge, and to become self-realised and enlightened. Mere wisdom and knowledge won't help if one does not practice self-control and good moral virtues in his life.]

दो०. तब फिरि जीव बिबिधि बिधि पावइ संसृति क्लेस ।

हरि माया अति दुस्तर तरि न जाइ बिहगेस ॥ ११८ (क) ॥

dōhā.

taba phiri jīva bibidhi bidhi pāva'i sansṛti klēsa.
hari māyā ati dustara tari na jā'i bihagēsa. 118 (a).

In this unfortunate way (when the light of the lamp of wisdom, self-realisation, enlightenment and truthful knowledge is extinguished due to the causes and in the manner outlined herein above) the Jiva (the living being) is made to suffer the miseries, pains and torments of the cycle of birth and death (because he falls in the trap of delusions and spiritual ignorance).

Oh King of Birds (bihagēsa)! It is indeed true that Lord Hari's formidable powers of creating delusions (hari māyā) in this world are stupendous, and they have astounding potentials. It is indeed intractable and cannot be easily measured and overcome; it is formidable and awesome. (Doha no. 118-a)

कहत कठिन समुझत कठिन साधत कठिन बिबेक ।

होइ घुनाच्छर न्याय जौं पुनि प्रत्यूह अनेक ॥ ११८ (ख) ॥

kahata kaṭhina samujhata kaṭhina sādhat kaṭhina bibēka.
hō'i ghunācchara n'yāya jaum̐ puni pratyūha anēka. 118 (b).

Truthful spiritual wisdom, self-realisation and enlightenment (known as Vivek) are very difficult to access and understand, and equally difficult to practice and retain once they are obtained.

It is by a fortunate chance that the creature is able to obtain it by repeated efforts and due diligence just like some figures that are involuntarily made in the wood by the wood-worm that nibble at it constantly (ghunācchara n'yāya jaum̐)¹, it becomes difficult for him to preserve it and persevere in its practice². (Doha no. 118-a)

[Note—¹ "ghunācchara n'yāya": When the wood-worm moves around and eats into the wood of a tree, certain marks or trails are made by it by its constant nibbling of the pith, and it may happen by chance that these marks or trails resemble some kind of object or alphabet of some ancient language. But the worm did not intent to make these marks or leave behind a trail that would imply that the worm was learned and had been writing something in the wood by chiselling into the pith. The wood-worm does not know anything about what kind of art-work it has produced in the wood; the designs that are etched by it in the pith are created by it unknowingly, and it has no awareness of the significance of what it has produced.

Likewise, even if a creature is fortunate to acquire Gyan and Vivek (true wisdom, true knowledge, self-realisation, enlightenment) by diligent pursuit of knowledge and practicing the various methods prescribed in the scriptures to obtain such knowledge, then he is very fortunate to have accessed these virtues. But the creature still remains unaware of their real values, he does not realise the importance and the value of the treasure-trove of spiritual peace, blessedness and happiness that has been accessed by him. The result is that it is soon lost as it is blown away when

the first gust of wind representing worldly temptations and delusions touches the creature. Hence, the signs that the creature has acquired Gyan and Vivek are wiped off soon like marks made on sand.

²To summarise, this Doha can be read as follows:- “In this way when the light of the lamp of Gyan is blown out, the Jiva is subjected to innumerable miseries that are typical to the cycle of birth and death. The Maya of Hari is extremely difficult to overcome; it is formidable and awesome. ‘Gyan’ is difficult to explain, difficult to understand, and equally difficult to be used as a means of spiritual attainment. If by good chance one is able to acquire Gyan, then it becomes difficult to protect it and sustain it, because there are countless hurdles in its path and many an insurmountable obstacles that are more intractable than anything else one has encountered in life.”]

चौ०. ग्यान पंथ कृपान कै धारा । परत खगेस होइ नहिं बारा ॥ १ ॥
जो निर्बिघ्न पंथ निर्बहई । सो कैवल्य परम पद लहई ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

gyāna pantha krpāna kai dhārā. parata khagēsa hō'i nahim bārā. 1.
jō nirbighna pantha nirbaha'ī. sō kaivalya parama pada laha'ī. 2.

Oh the King of Birds (khagēsa—i.e. Garud)! The path of Gyan (wisdom and knowledge) is like a double-edged sword. It is a very difficult path, and it does not take long for a spiritual aspirant to fall (or slip and commit errors) and get injured (or harmed) in this path. (1)

Only those who can endure the immense difficulties and great hurdles that are natural in this path, and can follow it successfully to the destination it leads, become eligible to attain the spiritually exalted stature of ‘Kaivalya’, the spiritual state of existence that is one of its only kind, is the most exalted and the best, and which entails attainment of oneness between the Atma of the creature and the Parmatma or the Supreme Being who represents the cosmic Consciousness¹. (2)

[Note—¹It is known as ‘Moksha’—the final emancipation and salvation of the soul. It is the ultimate destination for the soul when the cycle of birth and death stops for it. In this state, the individual’s consciousness merges and becomes one with and indistinguishable from the cosmic Consciousness.

To wit, the path of acquisition of true spiritual knowledge that leads to self-realisation, wisdom and enlightenment is a very difficult path and requires a lot of strenuous effort to travel. The chances of falling on the wayside are strong, and the rate of success is very low. The incumbent dangers of this path are like a two-edged sword because a slight carelessness leads to horrifying consequences for the spiritual aspirant. Even a small error on the part of the spiritual aspirant can upset all the efforts that has made for long in order to attain his objectives. The risks are too many and chances of failure are too high to be neglected.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 45.

However, there is a simpler way for the aspirant to attain his spiritual objectives. This way is outlined herein below in next set of verses.]

अति दुर्लभ कैवल्य परम पद । संत पुरान निगम आगम बद ॥ ३ ॥
 राम भजत सोइ मुकुति गोसाई । अनइच्छित आवइ बरिआई ॥ ४ ॥

ati durlabha kaivalya parama pada. santa purāna nigama āgama bada. 3.
 rāma bhajata sō'i mukuti gōsā'īm. ana'icchita āva'i bari'ā'īm. 4.

But attainment of the supreme state of existence known as the 'Kaivalya Param Pada'¹ is not an easy spiritual goal to achieve; it is extremely difficult and rare for one to successfully achieve this state of existence. This is what great saints, the Purans, the Vedas and the Tantras (i.e. the primary scriptures) say. (3)

Oh Lord ("gōsā'īm"—i.e. Garud)! That same rarest-of-rare and most difficult state of existence which is equivalent to the final liberation and deliverance of the creature from the cycle of birth and death, which also means emancipation and salvation of the creature's soul (sō'i mukuti), is easily attained without any especial effort or undertaking strenuous exercises by simply worshipping Lord Ram, and having devotion and affection for the Lord. (4)

[Note—¹“The great saints and sages (those who are wise and experienced in this matter), the Purans and the Vedas (the primary scriptures), as well as the rest of the scriptures (the secondary scriptures) affirm unanimously that the attainment of the exalted spiritual stature of 'Kaivalya' is extremely difficult and riddled with difficulties. But the same 'Mukti' (beatitude, the final emancipation and salvation of the soul that is known as Kaivalya) is attainable automatically, without facing any difficulties or making any special efforts to acquire it due to the grace of Lord Ram which comes when one sincerely worships the Lord and has developed profound devotion and deep affection for him. Put simply it means that the best kind of spiritual state of existence marked by the highest form of beatitude and bliss, and the best spiritual goal of the soul to obtain its emancipation and salvation are obtained when one adopts the path of 'Bhakti' instead of pursuing the path of 'Gyan'. It is true that Gyan is very powerful and potent, but it is like a male who can be seduced by a cunning woman. On the contrary, Bhakti is like a soft-hearted and kind woman who cannot be seduced by another woman no matter how cunning she might be!”]

The term 'Kaivalya Pada' literally means the 'only one state of existence when there is non-duality between any two entities; it is the supreme state of existence of Consciousness'. It is a unique non-dual state of existence when the individual Jiva, the living being, obtains oneness with the Supreme Being; it is the ultimate state of supreme blessedness, beatitude and felicity; it is the attainment of emancipation and salvation; it is the final liberation and deliverance of the soul.

It envisions the merger of the 'self', the individual creature's Atma or soul, with the supreme 'Self' or the Supreme Soul known as the Supreme Brahm or the Supreme Being. This means that all distinctions between the individual creature and the supreme Brahm are erased, and they become one. This translates into freeing the creature from taking birth again and again. Refer: Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 108-109 of Krishna Yajur Veda.

In this context, refer also to Ram Charit Manas, (a) Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 36; (b) Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes

Doha no. 52; (ii) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 57; (iii) Doha no. 78—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 79.

How attainment of the supreme state of blessedness, blissfulness and beatitude is not possible without having devotion for Lord Ram has been explained in the verses that follow herein below.]

जिमि थल बिनु जल रहि न सकाई । कोटि भाँति कोउ करै उपाई ॥ ५ ॥
तथा मोच्छ सुख सुनु खगराई । रहि न सकइ हरि भगति बिहाई ॥ ६ ॥

jimi thala binu jala rahi na sakā'ī. kōṭi bhāmṭi kō'u karai upā'ī. 5.
tathā mōccha sukha sunu khagarā'ī. rahi na saka'i hari bhagati bihā'ī. 6.

Oh the King of Birds (khagarā'ī)! Listen. Even as it is not possible to keep or hold liquid water dangling in mid air in space, for water needs the support of solid ground to stay at a particular point or level, so it is also impossible to sustain the feeling of supreme bliss, blessedness and beatitude that is attained when one accesses the Kaivalya Pada (oneness of the 'self' with the 'supreme Self'; oneness of the Atma with the Parmatma) without having devotion and affection (Bhakti) for Lord Ram, no matter how hard one tries to do so, or how many countless devices he devises to do it.¹ (5-6)

[Note—¹To wit, just as it is impossible that water can stay anywhere if there is no solid ground to support it no matter how hard a person tries to do so, because a liquid needs a hard surface for support, the beatitude and bliss experienced when the creature attains the highest state of oneness with the Supreme Being is not sustainable without the ground support of devotion for the same Supreme Being in his form known as Lord Ram.

It is impossible for water to stay hanging or dangling in mid air; it will stay at a particular point or level only if there is solid ground below it. Likewise, the state of supreme blissfulness, the exalted state of blessedness, felicity and beatitude is sustainable only if the living being has devotion and affection for Lord Ram. Otherwise it would be a transient affair with a temporary sense of spiritual joy that would dissipate sooner or later.]

अस बिचारि हरि भगत सयाने । मुक्ति निरादर भगति लुभाने ॥ ७ ॥
भगति करत बिनु जतन प्रयासा । संसृति मूल अबिद्या नासा ॥ ८ ॥

asa bicāri hari bhagata sayānē. mukti nirādara bhagati lubhānē. 7.
bhagati karata binu jatana prayāsā. sansṛti mūla abidyā nāsā. 8.

Realising the stupendous spiritual value of Bhakti vis-à-vis Mukti (i.e. blissfulness and blessedness attained by having devotion for Lord God or Lord Ram, as compared to attaining the same state of blissfulness and blessedness by other means such as acquisition of knowledge and wisdom leading to self-realisation, or doing sacrifices, penances, austerities, meditation, reflection, contemplation etc.), those who are really clever, sagacious, erudite, intelligent and wise (sayānē) prefer Bhakti and become an

ardent devotees of Lord Hari instead of opting for Mukti which they prefer to spurn and cast aside¹. (7)

By following the path of Bhakti one is easily able to destroy or eliminate the root cause of all spiritual problems arising out of delusions and ignorance of the Truth (abidyā) that leads the creature to fall in the cycle of birth and death with its endless chain of miseries, pain, grief and torments². (8)

[Note—¹To wit, those who have understood the importance of Bhakti for Lord God as a means to attain their spiritual goal, they would shun all other means to achieve it.

Lord Ram has himself emphasised the supremacy of Bhakti over Gyan in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precedes Doha no. 45.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precedes Doha no. 118 which also refers to the presence of 'avidya' or spiritual ignorance that traps the in the vortex of sufferings and miseries.]

भोजन करिअ तृपिति हित लागी । जिमि सो असन पचवै जठरागी ॥ ९ ॥
असि हरिभगति सुगम सुखदाई । को अस मूढ़ न जाहि सोहाई ॥ १० ॥

bhōjana kari'a tṛpiti hita lāgī. jimi sō asana pacavai jaṭharāgī. 9.
asi haribhagati sugama sukhadāī. kō asa mūṛha na jāhi sōhāī. 10.

It is just like the case of one eating food to satisfy his hunger and deriving pleasure from its taste, but that food quietly, imperceptibly and unconsciously nourishes the body when it is digested in the stomach by the warm gastric juices that are active there¹. (9)

Say, who is so stupid and dumb that this path of Bhakti that is so easy and convenient, so comfortable and enjoyable, would not appeal to him²? (10)*

[Note—¹In a similar way, the path of Bhakti is very easy and enjoyable so much so that one can follow it effortlessly and without worrying about encountering problems. One derives a lot of pleasure by having Bhakti. It is not a dry or abstract path like the path of Gyan which entails acquisition of true knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment that leads to self-realisation. This path of Gyan is fraught with immense difficulties and numerous hurdles, and chances of success are low.

So therefore, by following the path of Bhakti one is able to attain his spiritual goals even while enjoying the journey. This is because Bhakti is naturally empowered to bless the aspirant with spiritual happiness, bliss and beatitude. It is also dear to Lord Ram, and the Lord takes care of all who prefer Bhakti over Gyan.

On the other hand, the spiritual path of Gyan is strenuous, tedious and cumbersome with so many strict vows and duties and observances to be followed that it becomes more of a burden for a creature than something one gladly looks forward to do. Gyan is like a strong male who when befriended can be of immense help and support to a person, but if the same male partner becomes angry due to some reason whatsoever then he creates a great many problems for the person.

²Who would not like to reach his destination by following a path that is straight and enjoyable, and free from troubles, uncertainties and hazards? Who would like to follow an alternate route that is very long, most difficult to traverse, and riddled with uncertain problems?

*Therefore, those who are wise and intelligent prefer to have Bhakti instead of Mukti. This is because if one has Bhakti, the best form of Mukti that is known as ‘Kaivalya’ would be easily available. It must be noted that the term ‘Mukti’ does not necessarily mean Kaivalya, as there are many kinds of Muktis, which broadly mean freedom—such as Jivan Mukti, Videha Mukti, Mukti from worldly problems, Mukti from bodily sufferings, Mukti from bondages etc. But these do not necessarily mean spiritual Mukti of the highest kind—it is called the Kaivalya Mukti. This sort of Mukti is attained by two paths—one is the path of Gyan, and the other is the path of Bhakti. As outlined above, the wise ones choose the latter over the former—i.e. they prefer Bhakti over Gyan. Once Bhakti comes, Kaivalya Mukti is on its way automatically.

The benefit of following the path of Bhakti is that the basis of all spiritual ailments, such as remaining trapped in the endless cycle of birth and death in this mortal world, which is ‘Avidya’ (lack of correct spiritual knowledge), gets automatically eliminated, without making any special effort for getting rid of it, just like the case of one eating some delicious food to quench his hunger or for taste but as soon as the food enters the body it begins to get digested because the digestive fire burning inside the body is triggered automatically on its own, and digests the food silently without making it known to the eater. Say, is a man not a dumb fool if this miraculous Bhakti does not find favour with him?]

दो०. सेवक सेव्य भाव बिनु भव न तरिअ उरगारि ।

भजहु राम पद पंकज अस सिद्धांत बिचारि ॥ ११९ (क) ॥

dōhā.

sēvaka sēbya bhāva binu bhava na tari'a uragāri.

bhajahu rāma pada pañkaja asa sid'dhānta bicāri. 119 (a).

Oh the enemy of serpents (“uragāri”—i.e. Garud)! Unless one develops the attitude of submission and loyalty towards Lord Ram like a loyal and faithful servant has for his benevolent master and lord, thereby thinking “I am a humble servant of my Lord, and I will serve him with utmost devotion, sincerity and faith”, it is not possible to cross the mighty ocean symbolised by the cycle of birth and death in this mortal world.

Keeping this principle in mind, you (Garud) must worship Lord Ram and have single-minded devotion for him. (Doha no. 119-a)

जो चेतन कहँ जड़ करइ जड़हि करइ चैतन्य ।

अस समर्थ रघुनायकहि भजहिं जीव ते धन्य ॥ ११९ (ख) ॥

jō cētana kaham̐ jāra kara'i jārahi kara'i caitan'ya.
asa samartha raghunāyakahi bhajahim̐ jīva tē dhan'ya. 119 (b).

The Lord who is so stupendously mighty and powerful, the Lord who possesses such astounding mystical powers that he can transform inanimate entities into animate entities, and vice versa—those Jivas (creatures; living beings) who worship such a majestic Lord as Sri Raghunayak (“raghunāyaka”—the Great King of the descends of king Raghu of Ayodhya) are indeed and without any gainsay most fortunate and blessed.¹ (Doha no. 119-b)

[Note—¹To wit, it is just not possible to get across this vast ocean represented by the world of transmigration if one does not become firmly convinced of the eclectic view ‘I am a humble servant, and the Lord God is the one whom I serve’. So therefore, be firmly established in this view-point, and have steady and robust devotion and affection in the holy feet of Lord Ram. Those Jivas (living beings) who worship and have devotion for Lord Ram—the almighty Lord of creation who can turn the inanimate entities into animate entities, and vice versa—are indeed most fortunate and blessed.]

चौ०. कहेउँ ग्यान सिद्धांत बुझाई । सुनहु भगति मनि कै प्रभुताई ॥ १ ॥
राम भगति चिंतामनि सुंदर । बसइ गरुड़ जाके उर अंतर ॥ २ ॥
परम प्रकास रूप दिन राती । नहिं कछु चहिअ दिआ घृत बाती ॥ ३ ॥
caupāī.

kahē'um̐ gyāna sid'dhānta bujhāī. sunahu bhagati mani kai prabhutāī. 1.
rāma bhagati cintāmani sundara. basa'i garuṛa jākē ura antara. 2.
parama prakāsa rūpa dina rātī. nahim̐ kachu cahī'a di'ā ghr̥ta bātī. 3.

In the forgoing discourse I have elucidated at length to you about the principles governing Gyan (esoteric knowledge pertaining to the mysteries of the soul, and how to attain liberation and deliverance as well as beatitude through this path; gnosis).

Now listen carefully about the profound glories, the stupendous spiritual powers, and the magnificent virtues and importance of Bhakti (devotion for Lord God) which is like a priceless Gem. (1)

Oh Garud! Lord Ram's Bhakti (having devotion, affection, love, faith, belief in the Lord; submission and surrender before him; serving him selflessly) is like a Gem known as 'Chintaamani'—a magical and priceless self-illuminated gem that removes all sorts of worries and miseries of a person who possesses it.

Any person's heart where it ('the priceless gem symbolising the eclectic spiritual virtue of Bhakti') is found --- (2)

--- is well illuminated day and night. This mystically empowered Gem is self-illuminated, and so it does not need a lamp, ghee (clarified butter) or a wick to keep it lighted with a fluorescent shine¹. (3)

[Note—¹If Bhakti resides in the heart of a person then there is constant illumination in it. There is no chance of darkness symbolising delusions and its attendant spiritual problems, or the myriad forms of worldly worries and sufferings that normally overwhelm a person, to ever find a foothold and give trouble to him.

He is freed from all fears and worries about the fate and destiny of his soul. Any person who has given Bhakti a chance to find a permanent place in his heart does not have to worry about his spiritual well-being any longer, as this now becomes the responsibility of Lord Ram to whom Bhakti is dedicated. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line nos. 4-10 that precede Doha no. 43.

Unlike the illumination of spiritual wisdom, enlightenment and self-realisation that Gyan produces, for which butter, lamp and wick are needed, i.e. for which many virtuous qualities are needed to be inculcated and carefully nurtured as outlined in the foregoing verses, the illumination produced by Bhakti is self-created; it is an incandescent light that does not need any external aid to illuminate the inner-self of the Jiva.

The sacred, divine and holy story of Lord Ram, known as the “Ram Charit Manas” has also been compared to the Chintaamani gem in its Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 32.

The verses herein below outline some of the benefits that accrue to a person who has Bhakti dwelling in his heart.]

मोह दरिद्र निकट नहिं आवा । लोभ बात नहिं ताहि बुझावा ॥ ४ ॥
 प्रबल अबिद्या तम मिटि जाई । हारहिं सकल सलभ समुदाई ॥ ५ ॥
 खल कामादि निकट नहिं जाहीं । बसइ भगति जाके उर माहीं ॥ ६ ॥

mōha daridra nikaṭa nahim āvā. lōbha bāta nahim tāhi bujhāvā. 4.
 prabala abidyā tama miṭi jāī. hārahim sakala salabha samudāī. 5.
 khala kāmādi nikaṭa nahim jāhīm. basa'i bhagati jākē ura māhīm. 6.

Once this wonderful Gem is placed in the treasury (heart) of one's inner-self, poverty symbolised by 'Moha' (worldly attractions, attachments and infatuation) does not torment him.

[This is because this Gem inherently possesses the power to remove poverty of all kinds. Whereas an ordinary Gem found in this world would remove sufferings arising out of lack of wealth and material things, the Gem in the form of Bhakti removes all sorts of spiritual troubles and worries of the devotee. 'Moha' is the root cause for all miseries and grief arising out of the various relationships that a creature establishes with the material, gross and perishable world. Bhakti diverts the attention of the creature from the illusive charm and false happiness that he thinks he would get in this mortal world of perishable things, the reason why he is attracted to the world and gets infatuated with it, to the world of eternal spiritual peace and happiness as well as contentedness that he gets by worshipping and having love and devotion for Lord Ram, the Supreme Being in a manifested form.

To wit, the bearer of this Gem does not have to suffer from the dearth of any 'spiritual riches' in the form of beatitude, blessedness, bliss, peace, happiness and contentedness in his life.]

The light that naturally emanates from this mystical Gem cannot be extinguished by the gust of wind represented by 'Lobha' (greed and temptations of

the material sense objects of the world and the desire of the sense organs for gratification).

[This is because the light symbolising spiritual peace, beatitude, blessedness, bliss, happiness and contentedness that emanates from this mystical Gem known as ‘Bhakti’ comes from within it; it is self-generated. Therefore it needs no protection. It is also not like the light emanating from another Gem known as ‘Gyan’ because this latter Gem needs great care and constant polishing by way of following many strict spiritual observances and diligent practices to maintain its shine.

Hence, the Gem representing ‘Bhakti’ is not affected by any external factor like the case of an ordinary oil lamp whose light can be extinguished if there is a strong gust of wind, or the Gem known as ‘Gyan’ that needs constant care to maintain its brilliant shine for otherwise it would become dull and lustreless.] (4)

In the eternal light shining from this self-illuminated Gem of Bhakti, the darkness symbolising the powerful effects of ‘Avidya’ (ignorance that gives rise to delusions and its innumerable problems; lack of Vidya; lack of true and correct spiritual knowledge) is automatically eliminated.

[This is because ‘light’ and ‘darkness’ can’t co-exist. The light of Bhakti dispels the overpowering fear arising out of ignorance and delusions that are like the darkness of night when one is overcome with the horrifying prospects of having to face so many ghosts and phantoms representing countless miseries, grief and torments associated with the mortal life in this gross world of transmigration.]

Hordes of moths representing the many sensual pleasures and material charms of this world fail to extinguish this light of Bhakti by attacking it from all sides.

[Moths are attracted in droves by the flame of a lamp. They crowd around it in such huge numbers that they create a virtual blanket around the flame and suffocate it; they also jump in the flame in hordes, resulting in the flame flickering and dying away gradually. In this metaphor, the countless sensual pleasures and material charms of the world fail to disturb the inner peace and happiness of a person who has devotion for Lord God in his heart.] (5)*

Other insects representing ‘Kaam’ (lust, passion, longing) and other such wicked tormentors of the soul also aren’t able to go near the person who has Bhakti enshrined in his heart.

[A comprehensive list of tormentors of the creature and how they trouble him is given in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 70—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 72.] (6)*

[Note—*The self-effusing light from this Gem helps to eliminate the darkness created by Avidya. The irritating group of insects represented by such negativities as Mada (arrogance, haughtiness, ego, pride and vanity) etc. fail to disturb the Jiva and dirty the environs of the Gem. In the case of an oil lamp, the insects are attracted to its light in their hordes, dance around its flame, get burnt, and die, littering the area around the flame and the lamp. Sometimes it often also happens that they die and fall in the oil and cover its surface with their carcasses, thereby suffocating the wick of its space and the flame of its air, and this result in the flame gradually dying away. In the case of the Gem no such thing can happen because there is no physical flame to attract the insects.

The net effect is that the person in whose heart Bhakti resides, the evil-mongering wicked fellows such as Kaam (worldly passions), Krodha (anger, wrath, fury), Lobha (greed) and their like, do not dare to come near him.]

गरल सुधासम अरि हित होई । तेहि मनि बिनु सुख पाव न कोई ॥ ७ ॥
ब्यापहिं मानस रोग न भारी । जिन्ह के बस सब जीव दुखारी ॥ ८ ॥

garala sudhāsama ari hita hō'ī. tēhi mani binu sukha pāva na kō'ī. 7.
byāpahim mānasa rōga na bhārī. jinha kē basa saba jīva dukhārī. 8.

For a person who has this Gem in the form of Bhakti in his heart, a poison turns into nectar, and an enemy or someone who harbours animosity towards becomes a friend.

Indeed, in all sooth and without gainsay, no one can find true happiness, peace, bliss and contentedness without having this miraculous Gem. (7)

Again, such a fortunate person never suffers from any of the grievous emotional problems and spiritual woes known as 'Manas Roga' ("mānasa rōga"—literally meaning mental diseases arising out of emotional disturbances)¹ from which countless creatures suffer interminably. (8)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 121 where Garud has asked Kaagbhusund to tell him what are the Manas Rogas; and from Chaupai line no. 28 that precedes Doha no. 121—to Doha no. 122-a where Kaagbhusund has described this spiritual disease to Garud along with its remedy.]

राम भगति मनि उर बस जाकें । दुख लवलेस न सपनेहुँ ताकें ॥ ९ ॥
चतुर सिरोमनि तेइ जग माहीं । जे मनि लागि सुजतन कराहीं ॥ १० ॥

rāma bhagati mani ura basa jākēm. dukha lavalēsa na sapanēhum' tākēm. 9.
catura sirōmani tē'i jaga māhīm. jē mani lāgi sujatana karāhīm. 10.

Anyone in whose subtle heart dwells the Gem representing Bhakti for Lord Ram, such a person can never suffer from a trace of grief, misery and torment of any kind even in his dream¹. (9)

Therefore, a person is said to be sagacious, erudite, wise and intelligent if he makes an auspicious and all-out diligent effort to acquire this priceless spiritual Gem, and then carefully stores it or enshrines it in the treasury of his heart.

[To wit, a person who makes diligent effort to acquire this Gem of Bhakti is deemed to be the most wise, clever, intelligent and fortunate amongst all men.] (10)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 122 where a similar idea is expressed.]

सो मनि जदपि प्रगट जग अहई । राम कृपा बिनु नहिं कोउ लहई ॥ ११ ॥
सुगम उसाय पाइबे केरे । नर हतभाज्य देहिं भटभेरे ॥ १२ ॥

sō mani jadapi pragata jaga aha'ī. Rāma kṛpā binu nahim kō'u laha'ī. 11.
sugama upāya pā'ibē kērē. Nara hatabhāgya dēhim bhaṭabhērē. 12.

Though the astounding spiritual value and magnificent glory of this Gem (Bhakti) is so obvious in this world, yet one is not able to access or acquire it without the grace of Lord Ram.

[This Gem known as 'Bhakti' is not like some precious jewel of this material world that one can find by making concerted effort to acquire it. This Bhakti can only be accessed if Lord Ram shows his grace and kindness upon a seeker.] (11)*

Fortunately, the ways and means to access this valuable Gem are also very easy, but the irony is that those who are unlucky and ill-fated fail to employ these opportunities and remain deprived of this priceless jewel¹. (12)*

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (i) Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 128—to Doha no. 131 where sage Valmiki has listed the many easy ways by which one can develop Bhakti for Lord Ram; (ii) Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 35—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 36 where Lord Ram has outlined to Sabari the simple ways to obtain Bhakti; (iii) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 45; and Doha no. 46 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it where Lord Ram has outlined the simple ways to obtain Bhakti to the citizens of Ayodhya.

*All said and done, this Gem is accessible only when Lord Ram becomes graceful and favourable upon the devotee. This too is very easy (because the Lord is gracious and merciful and obliging by nature, and a simple request or prayer is sufficient to make the Lord grant this Gem to the devotee), but the irony is that still the unfortunate man rejects it. In the absence of true knowledge and awareness of who Lord Ram is, the ignorant man thinks that he is submitting himself to heresy, and prefers to follow the troublesome and arduous path of Gyan in his endeavour to seek Mukti for himself.]

पावन पर्वत बेद पुराना । राम कथा रुचिराकर नाना ॥ १३ ॥
मर्मी सज्जन सुमति कुदारी । ग्यान बिराग नयन उरगारी ॥ १४ ॥

pāvana parbata bēda purānā. rāma kathā rucirākara nānā. 13.
marmī sajjana sumati kudārī. gyāna birāga nayana uragārī. 14.

[Using symbols from Nature, Kaagbhusund says—] The scriptures such as the Vedas and the Purans are like the sacred mountains (because they are enormous in their size). The many enchanting stories and fascinating events associated with the life and time of Lord Ram are like the many mines and caves (of precious stones) that are found on these mountains. (13)*

Saints and devotees are the people who know the secret of these mines and caves, and how to extract the precious gems hidden in them (like expert mineralogists do).

A wise mind and its intelligence are like the sharp pickaxe that is used to dig out the precious gems (representing spiritual rewards that are got by a person who pursues Bhakti).

Gyan (true and analytical knowledge) and Vairagya (renunciation, detachment and dispassion) are the two eyes of such saints and devotees (who are like the mineralogists)¹. (14)*

[Note—*The scriptures such as the Vedas and the Purans are like the holy Mountains; the divine story of Lord Ram, with its numerous versions and interpretations, are like the numerous mines (caves) in them (where spiritual secrets lie hidden and buried); the many sages and saints are the wise ones who know about them and their sacred location (i.e. they can unravel the mysteries of the story and explain them to the eager hearer); and the wise intellect and mind are like the spade, the shovel and the pick-axe which are to be used to unearth the gems hidden in them (i.e. to unravel the holiness, the divinity and spiritual message contained in the story of Lord Ram).

The two eyes needed to see this treasure are represented by the twin virtues of Gyan and Vairagya. One must have a deep and penetrating intellect to understand the import of the message contained in the divine story, and he must have the virtue of renunciation and detachment from this world so that he can concentrate upon benefiting from this knowledge without getting constantly distracted and disturbed by the tug and pull of the mundane world.

¹To wit, in order to mine the spiritual treasure represented by Bhakti, one must have the two indispensable virtues of 'Gyan' and 'Vairagya'. Just like a blind person who stumbles and falls repeatedly, and it becomes too difficult for him to reach his destination, a spiritual aspirant who has no Gyan and Vairagya in him also finds it virtually impossible to access Bhakti that would grant him sustainable spiritual blessedness, beatitude, felicity, bliss, happiness, contentedness etc, as well as liberation and deliverance from all sorts of worldly sufferings that come naturally with Bhakti.

In the absence of Gyan and Vairagya, even if a person manages to find the Gem known as Bhakti, it would be too hard for him to protect it just like a blind man who may have a priceless gem in his possession but would not be able to protect it from thieves or even his jealous friends who are envious of his good fortune.

This observation is extremely significant in the context of earlier statements where it was said that Gyan is very cumbersome and one should try to steer clear of it. But by likening Gyan as one of the eyes of a wise spiritual seeker of Bhakti, its importance and value is established beyond doubt. In fact, 'Gyan' is one of the two main tools for accessing Bhakti, the other being 'Vairagya'. It is stressed here that Gyan plays an important role in one's spiritual welfare, and it should not be overlooked or undermined or neglected while one pursues Bhakti.

This is because without having true knowledge, enlightenment and wisdom, Bhakti becomes a blind pursuit. Like a blind man groping in the dark to reach his destination, and even if he manages to find what he has been searching for he is not sure of what he has found, a person who does not know his spiritual goal or whom he is worshipping, if he worships some God just because others are doing it, he is bound to falter easily and overcome with doubts and uncertainties when confronted by some fact that is beyond his understanding.

The simplest example we have is that of Garud himself in this Ramayan. He is an eternal companion of Lord Vishnu as he is the Lord's vehicle, his mount, but he too was overcome with doubt about the reality of Lord Ram, which led him to Kaagbhusund and listen to the story of Lord Ram and told about the truth of the Lord's actual identity. After having Gyan, or true knowledge of who the Lord was, Garud's doubts and confusions vanished. So the importance of 'Gyan' as an instrument to reinforce Bhakti cannot be underestimated.

Similarly, 'Vairagya' is essential for Bhakti to take a firm root in the heart of the devotee. A person can do one thing at a time; otherwise he would be too distracted to focus on his goal if he tries many things at the same time. If the mind and the heart of a spiritual aspirant are distracted by the countless temptations from the material objects of the world, if the aspirant fails to practice renunciation and detach himself from the world, he won't be able to focus on his actual goal of attaining spiritual blessedness. It is just like a college student or a researcher in an university who does not focus on his studies and wastes his time in worthless indulgences. Either he would fail his exams or pass with a very dismal grade.]

भाव सहित खोजइ जो प्रानी । पाव भगति मनि सब सुख खानी ॥ १५ ॥
मोरें मन प्रभु अस बिस्वासा । राम ते अधिक राम कर दासा ॥ १६ ॥

bhāva sahita khōja'i jō prānī. pāva bhagati mani saba sukha khānī. 15.
mōrēm mana prabhu asa bisvāsā. rāma tē adhika rāma kara dāsā. 16.

A man who searches for this Gem known as Bhakti with due sincerity and devotion (commitment and diligence) is sure to find it. This Gem is a treasury that is full of all happiness and joy for him; it is a giver of all happiness and joy to him. [To wit, Bhakti grants bliss, beatitude, felicity and blessedness to its adherents. It grants to its followers liberation and deliverance from all miseries and sufferings. It bestows emancipation and salvation to the soul.] (15)

In my (Kaagbhusund's) view, the devotee of Lord Ram is superior to the Lord himself¹. (16)

[Note—¹Refer also to Tulsidas' Book of Wisdom, known as 'Dohawali', verse nos. 473 and 528 where also it is said that a devotee of the Lord is more important than the Lord himself.]

राम सिंधु घन सज्जन धीरा । चंदन तरु हरि संत समीरा ॥ १७ ॥
सब कर फल हरि भगति सुहाई । सो बिनु संत न काहूँ पाई ॥ १८ ॥
अस बिचारि जोइ कर सतसंगा । राम भगति तेहि सुलभ बिहंगा ॥ १९ ॥

rāma sindhu ghana sajjana dhīrā. candana taru hari santa samīrā. 17.
saba kara phala hari bhagati suhāī. sō binu santa na kāhūṁ pāī. 18.
asa bicāri jō'i kara satasaṅgā. rāma bhagati tēhi sulabha bihaṅgā. 19.

If Lord Ram is the ocean, then the wise men (who are devoted to him and possess the Gem of Bhakti) are like the rain-bearing clouds¹.

In the same way, if Lord Hari is like the tree of sandalwood, the saints and sages are like the gust of soft wind (that takes the sweet fragrance of the sandalwood and helps to spread it far and wide)². (17)

Bhakti is the best fruit of all spiritual endeavours, and no one can get it (recognize this fruit amongst the cluster of so many assorted fruits or rewards) without the help of saints and sages who help a person to recognise the true rewards that come by following the path of Bhakti. (18)

Realising the importance of saints and other wise ones in the effort to attain the Gem of Bhakti, anyone who seeks such exalted souls and establishes communion with them is easily able to acquire the Gem of Bhakti of Lord Ram³. (19)

[Note—¹The ocean is full of water, but it is of no use to the world because its water cannot irrigate fields and produce crop. The salty and dirty water of the ocean evaporates to form clouds. The water molecules in the cloud are free from their salty origin; they are clean and sweet. When this water, which has its origin in the ocean, begins to shower down upon the earth as rain, it fosters life and greenery everywhere. Harvest and life directly depend upon rain-water, and not at all upon the ocean, though the origin of the rain is in the ocean which is a vast reservoir of water, but the rain benefits the population more directly. This is exactly what is meant here. Though the divine story of Lord Ram is a vast reservoir of spirituality and bliss, its benefit can be enjoyed only when it is explained by wise men, and when the seeker accesses the key to his happiness and bliss, which is Bhakti.

²The saints and sages help to propagate the virtue of Bhakti and other spiritual fruits contained in the divine story of Lord Ram, and make them easily available to this world, in its farthest corner, just like the wind carries the fragrance of the sandalwood to distant places, far away from the physical location of the actual tree.

³Earlier in Chaupai line no. 14 it has already been said that wise saints are like expert mineralogists who know how to dig and extract the priceless gem from the mine present in the mountains symbolising the voluminous text of the scriptures. Company of such wise men helps a spiritual aspirant in many ways. It helps him to remove his doubts; it helps him to choose the correct path; it helps him avoid pitfalls; it helps him to discover the reward when it comes.

Even Lord Ram has stressed the importance of saints in the path of attainment of Bhakti in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 45 while he was preaching the citizens of Ayodhya on the glories of Bhakti.]

दो०. ब्रह्म पयोनिधि मंदर ग्यान संत सुर आहिं ।

कथा सुधा मथि काढ़हिं भगति मधुरता जाहिं ॥ १२० (क) ॥

dōhā.

brahma payōnidhi mandara gyāna santa sura āhim.
kathā sudhā mathi kārḥahim bhagati madhuratā jāhim. 120 (a).

‘Brahm’ (the cosmic Consciousness, the knowledge of which is the subject matter of all research, discussion, exposition and elucidation in the Vedas, the Purans and other scriptures) is like a vast and fathomless ocean, ‘Gyan’ (the knowledge of this Brahm; gnosis; enlightenment and true wisdom) is like Mt. Mandrachal (which was used in some ancient time to churn this ocean in search of Amrit, the nectar of eternity and bliss), and ‘Saints’ are like the Gods (who had churned the cosmic ocean using this mountain as the churning rod to extract Amrit from the cosmic water)¹.

These saints thoroughly study, analyse, understand and discuss the scriptures in order to extract their essence in the form of the divine, holy and sacred stories of the Lord (Sri Ram) that is extremely sweet and pleasant like nectar, and would provide nourishment to the Atma or the soul of all living beings by granting them abiding blessedness, a sense of spiritual contentedness and fulfilment, and joy, happiness, bliss, felicity and beatitude in mighty abundance². (Doha no. 120-a)

[Note—¹This metaphor alludes to the legendary churning of the ocean by the Gods in search of Amrit, the nectar of eternity and bliss. At that time, they had used this mountain as the churning rod.

²In this Doha, Brahm is likened to the cosmic ocean because Brahm is as vast and all-encompassing like it. The entire universe was filled with the cosmic ether from which the first signs of creation emerged in the form of sound waves. Brahm represents that cosmic Consciousness which first created the ripples of sound waves in the cosmic ether to mark the beginning of the new phase of creation. Brahm fills the entire universe just like water fills the entire ocean and ether fills the cosmic sky.

Just like the case of the huge bowl of earth acting as a container or vessel or receptacle filled with water which we recognise as an ‘ocean’ in terrestrial terms, and the sky is the cosmic bowl that is filled with ether at the macro-level of creation which we recognise as the cosmos or the universe, the knowledge of Brahm that is contained in the scriptures is similarly a vast and fathomless metaphoric ocean that is a huge reservoir of spiritual knowledge.

The ocean is full of fascinating mysteries and is a virtual miniature cosmos with its independent marine culture and ecosystem. It is different from life as we know it from what we see and understand of it on the land. No one has ever been able to map the ocean fully, and no one would ever know the whole truth that lies in its vast bowl and an endless realm. The ocean surrounds the land-mass of earth and appears to support it from below because the earth appears to be floating on its surface like a ball.

The ocean is therefore compared to Brahm because Brahm is also measureless, endless and fathomless like the ocean, is mysterious and fascinating like the ocean, and surrounds and supports the entire creation like the ocean appears to do in relation to the land-mass of earth.

In some ancient time, the Gods had churned the cosmic ocean to extract Amrit, the nectar of eternity and bliss. So likewise, erudite and sagacious saints read and analyse the scriptures to extract their essence in the form of the divine stories of the Lord God, stories that bestow spiritual blessedness, bliss, peace, happiness and contentedness to the reader and the listener alike. These sacred stories of the Lord provide liberation and deliverance from all worldly miseries and torments to the

reader as well as the listener; these holy stories grant emancipation and salvation to the soul of both of them.

In brief, the knowledge of Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness and the Supreme Being, that is contained in the Vedas is like the vast cosmic ocean; the virtue of Gyan is like the Mandraachal Mountain; and the saints and wise ones are like the Gods who had churned this ocean to extract Amrit from its bowls.

Anyone who symbolically churns this ocean is able to extract the Amrit or nectar of eternity and bliss. To wit, any wise, erudite and sagacious person, such as a saint, who thoroughly studies, understands and analyses the scriptures is able to extract their essence in the form of the glorious virtue of 'Bhakti' that is the central message contained in all the divine stories of the Lord God found in the scriptures. This message is like a spiritual nectar as it provides an immense sense of blessedness, joy, bliss and ecstasy to all who preach it and hear it. This nectar also grants liberation and deliverance from all the horrors and miseries of mortal life; it bestows emancipation and salvation to the soul of the teacher as well as the disciple.]

बिरति चर्म असि ग्यान मद लोभ मोह रिपु मारि ।

जय पाइअ सो हरि भगति देखु खगेस बिचारि ॥ १२० (ख) ॥

birati carma asi gyāna mada lōbha mōha ripu māri.

jaya pā'i'a sō hari bhagati dēkhu khagēsa bicāri. 120 (b).

{The analogy of a warrior defeating his enemies to obtain victory is used here to emphasise the importance of Bhakti for a person to help him eliminate all spiritual hurdles in life to obtain abiding peace and happiness as well as liberation and deliverance for his soul.}

Using 'Vairagya' (dispassion, detachment and renunciation) as an impregnable shield for self-defence, employing the symbolic sword of 'Gyan' (gnosis; truthful knowledge, self-realisation, wisdom and enlightenment) to slay the countless enemies represented by the hordes of spiritual tormentors such as 'Mada' (arrogance, haughtiness, pride and ego), 'Lobha' (greed and rapacity for material things and riches of the gross world, and a desire for comfort and pleasure that is derived from them), 'Moha' (infatuation and attachment with such things)—it is indeed 'Bhakti' of Lord Hari (devotion for Lord Sri Ram) that helps the living being to attain victory over his (spiritual) tormentors and enemies in this world who had earlier robbed him of all his peace and happiness.

Oh the King of Birds (khagēsa)! Reflect over this matter deeply and try to understand its implications and import. [Oh Garud, you must understand that it is actually the glorious virtue of 'Bhakti' for Lord Ram which stands close to a devotee to help him fight his spiritual tormentors like a faithful companion of a warrior who stands by his side, shoulder-to-shoulder, does to help him defeat his enemies.]¹ (Doha no. 120-b)

[Note—¹It is the Bhakti for Lord Hari (Lord Vishnu in the form of Lord Ram) that protects the devotee with the help of the shield symbolized by the virtue of Vairagya, and kills his enemies represented by Mada, Lobha and Moha by using the sword of Gyan to make him fearless.

Mada, Lobha, Moha are some of the spiritual enemies of a person. They are called ‘enemies’ because they keep tormenting him and prevent him from attaining peace and happiness in life. To overcome these enemies, a person needs to have a good friend and a comrade-in-arms by his side, and he finds such a true friend in the form of the virtue of ‘Bhakti’.

Further, to defeat such formidable enemies, one needs to have a shield symbolised by the virtue of ‘Vairagya’, and a weapon in the form of a sword symbolised by the virtue of ‘Gyan’. He uses this sword of Gyan to eliminate his spiritual enemies, and in case he is attacked directly by them he uses the shield of Vairagya to protect himself.

To wit, a wise, erudite and sagacious spiritual aspirant uses knowledge and wisdom to overcome the numerous faults and shortcomings that afflict his inner-self like so many spiritual diseases so as to pave the way to perfection, holiness, purity and piety of the soul. Then he uses the virtue of dispassion and detachment to overcome the formidable forces of temptation and gnawing desire for gratification that arise from the material world of sense objects and their countless charms. ‘Victory’ in this battle is attainment of eternal spiritual peace, tranquillity, joy and happiness for the aspirant; it is attainment of liberation and deliverance from all miseries, sufferings and pains in life in this mortal world; it is obtaining final emancipation and salvation for his soul so that he is freed from the cycle of birth and death once and for all.]

चौ०. पुनि सप्रेम बोलेउ खगराऊ । जौं कृपाल मोहि ऊपर भाऊ ॥ १ ॥

नाथ मोहि निज सेवक जानी । सप्त प्रस्न मम कहहु बखानी ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

puni saprēma bōlē'u khagarā'ū. jaurṁ kṛpāla mōhi ūpara bhā'ū. 1.
nātha mōhi nija sēvaka jānī. sapta prasna mama kahahu bakhānī. 2.

The king of birds (“khagarā'ū”—i.e. Garud) affectionately said to Kaagbhusund once again, ‘Oh the merciful and gracious one (kṛpāla)! If you have affection for me and regard me as your true follower or disciple (sēvaka jānī), then oh Lord (jaurṁ - nātha), please be kind to answer my following seven questions in detail¹. (1-2)

[Note—¹In the previous discourse, Kaagbhusund has expounded upon the importance of and the differences between Gyan and Bhakti, as well as the reason why he had preferred the body of a crow over all other options.

A good disciple should feel free to ask his teacher any question that arises in his mind, and a good teacher should give this freedom to his student. Garud wished to clarify on some more points, and he did not hesitate in requesting Kaagbhusund to remove his doubts. The ensuing verses relate to this discourse.]

प्रथमहिं कहहु नाथ मतिधीरा । सब ते दुर्लभ कवन सरीरा ॥ ३ ॥

बड़ दुख कवन कवन सुख भारी । सोउ संछेपहिं कहहु बिचारी ॥ ४ ॥

prathamahim̐ kahahu nātha matidhīrā. saba tē durlabha kavana sarīrā. 3.
baṛa dukha kavana kavana sukha bhārī. sō'u sañchēpahim̐ kahahu bicārī. 4.

Oh the erudite and sagacious Lord with a steadfast intellect (nātha matidhīrā)! First tell me which form is regarded as the rarest (i.e. the best) of all the forms in which a creature is born? (3)

Then tell me which is the greatest sorrow or grief for a creature, and which is the best sort of pleasure, joy and happiness? Please think over the matter and enlighten me in brief. (4)

संत असंत मरम तुम्ह जानहु । तिन्ह कर सहज सुभाव बखानहु ॥ ५ ॥
कवन पुन्य श्रुति बिदित बिसाला । कहहु कवन अघ परम कराला ॥ ६ ॥

santa asanta marama tumha jānahu. tinha kara sahaja subhāva bakhānahu.
5.
kavana pun'ya śruti bidita bisālā. kahahu kavana agha parama karālā. 6.

You are well acquainted with the inherent qualities, mentality and characters of both the saints and the non-saints. Please describe these natural qualities and innate dispositions for me¹. (5)

Then tell me which is the best meritorious deed (pun'ya) that is lauded by the Vedas (scriptures), and which is the worst and terrible sin or the greatest misdeed (agha parama karālā) that a creature can ever commit. (6)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 37—to Doha no. 41 where Lord Ram has enumerated these qualities himself when requested by Bharat.]

मानस रोग कहहु समुझाई । तुम्ह सबग्य कृपा अधिकाई ॥ ७ ॥
तात सुनहु सादर अति प्रीती । मैं संछेप कहउँ यह नीती ॥ ८ ॥

mānasa rōga kahahu samujhā'ī. tumha sarbagya kṛpā adhikā'ī. 7.
tāta sunahu sādara ati prīti. maim̐ sañchēpa kaha'um̐ yaha nīti. 8.

After that, please explain to me clearly the various mental and emotional diseases (mānasa rōga) that afflict (and torment) a creature. You are all-knowing and omniscient, and you are endowed with the virtues of grace and compassion. [Therefore I am sure you will not become annoyed when I pose these queries before you, and you would be gracious enough to answer my questions clearly so that all my remaining doubts are fully removed.] (7)

(Kaagbhusund graciously and willingly replied—] ‘Dear (tāta), have faith in me and listen attentively as I give my views to answer your questions in brief. [To wit, trust me that I will tell you the correct thing as it stands, without any bias, and without

concealing or withholding any information. Now I shall answer your questions one by one.] (8)

नर तन सम नहिं कवनिउ देही । जीव चराचर जाचत तेही ॥ ९ ॥

नरक स्वर्ग अपबर्ग निसेनी । ग्यान बिराग भगति सुभ देनी ॥ १० ॥

nara tana sama nahim kavani'u dēhī. jīva carācara jācata tēhī. 9.
naraka svarga apabarga nisēnī. gyāna birāga bhagati subha dēnī. 10.

[The answer to the first question:] There is no form or body like that of a human being. Every creature, animate or inanimate, craves for it; every creature would like to be born as a human being. [To wit, the human body is the best and the rarest of all the forms which a creature is fortunate to get in the hierarchy of evolution and its cycle of birth and death. If given a choice, every creature would prefer to be born as a human being.]¹ (9)

This human body is the stepping stone for either hell or heaven, and it can help the creature to obtain final emancipation and salvation, or attain liberation and deliverance of the soul. It is an auspicious instrument, a powerful tool and an effective means by which one can attain the eclectic spiritual virtues of 'Gyan' (true knowledge, wisdom, self-realisation and enlightenment), 'Vairagya' (renunciation, dispassion and detachment) and Bhakti (devotion for Lord God)². (10)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 43—to Doha no. 44 where Lord Ram has himself praised the human form as the best form a creature can expect to get. The Lord has emphasised that this is the reason why one should not misuse it, but rather employ it to attain final liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death and its accompanying chain of miseries and torments. If one foolishly fritters away this opportunity in worthless worldly pursuits then one would gravely regret it for generations to come.

²To wit, the human body or form is regarded as the most evolved and the best form that a living being can hope to get in the process of evolution. A human is endowed with so many unique qualities and powers that no other form of creature possesses. The human form is the 'king of the animal kingdom'. Even as a king is free to do so many things that others in the kingdom can't, possesses immense powers and freedom to act, enjoys the best things of the world and so on and so forth, a creature is best placed to make a good decision for his future and determine his destiny when he is born as a human being as compared to any other form.

The creature enjoys so many privileges that are denied to any other form, and has so many excellent tools at his disposal as a human being to determine the course of his fate and destiny that it would be extremely unfortunate for him if he wastes this golden opportunity. Some of the excellent tools that are available to a creature in the form of a human being are his ability to think intelligently, make wise choices and exercise discretion, take wise decisions and act on his decisions, acquire knowledge and wisdom, do good deeds and practice auspicious things while shunning evil ones, and so on.

Say for instance, can an animal do meditation, study the scriptures, make charity, acquire skills and knowledge, or practice self-restraint and other spiritual values that a human being can?]

सो तनु धरि हरि भजहिं न जे नर । होहिं विषय रत मंद मंद तर ॥ ११ ॥
काँच किरिच बदलें ते लेहीं । कर ते डारि परस मनि देहीं ॥ १२ ॥

sō tanu dhari hari bhajahim na jē nara. hōhim viṣaya rata manda manda tara.
11.

kām̐ca kirica badalēm tē lēhīm. kara tē ḍāri parasa mani dēhīm. 12.

Those most unfortunate and ill-fated creatures who do not employ this human body to worship Lord Hari and have devotion for the Lord, and instead pursue and long for the most abhorable and lowliest of things of the gross mortal world and its sense objects of pleasure and self-gratification, are indeed utterly stupid as they willingly throw away a rare gem known as the ‘Parasmani’ (the magical gem that can convert base metals into precious ones such as gold; the philosopher’s stone) that is in their hands, and grab worthless pieces of glass beads instead. (11-12)

[Note—Here, using the human form to acquire the glorious virtues of Gyan, Vairagya and Bhakti that would pave the way for liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation is equivalent to having the ‘Parasmani’, while using the human body to indulge in worldly affairs and being obsessed by its charms and temptations is like willingly accepting glass beads and throwing away the Parasmani.]

नहिं दरिद्र सम दुख जग माहीं । संत मिलन सम सुख जग नाहीं ॥ १३ ॥
पर उपकार बचन मन काया । संत सहज सुभाउ खगराया ॥ १४ ॥

nahim daridra sama dukha jaga māhīm. santa milana sama sukha jaga nāhīm.
13.

para upakāra bacana mana kāyā. santa sahaja subhā'u khagarāyā. 14.

There is no misery in this world that can be greater than poverty and wants; and there is no happiness, no joy and no blessing greater in this world than having contact or association or communion with a sain¹t. (13)

‘Benefit and good of others’ is always in the speech, thought and deeds of a saint; this is their natural disposition and habit². (14)

[Note—¹Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 125-b where Lord Shiva has said the same thing to his consort Girija.

²The grand qualities of true saints have been outlined by Lord Ram himself in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 37—to Doha no. 38.

At the end of this discourse, Garud has lauded the virtues of saints while praising Kaagbhusund and thanking him for his spiritual advice that removed all his dilemmas and doubts in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 125.

Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, (i) Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 84; (ii) Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 31; and (iii) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 41.]

संत सहहिं दुख परहित लागी । परदुख हेतु असंत अभागी ॥ १५ ॥
भूर्ज तरू सम संत कृपाला । परहित निति सह बिपति बिसाला ॥ १६ ॥

santa sahaḥiṁ dukha parahita lāgī. paradukha hētu asanta abhāgī. 15.
bhūrja tarū sama santa kṛpālā. parahita niti saha bipati bisālā. 16.

Saints undergo sufferings for the benefit of others (so that the latter get solace and comfort), while non-saints are so unfortunate that they are the cause of pain and grief of others (even if they do not gain from it)¹. (15)

The merciful and tender-hearted saints and holy people are like the Birch tree, their principal nature being to serve others even if it means great suffering for themselves². (16)

[Note—¹True saints take great care that they are not the cause of any sort of discomfort to others. Instead, they strive to provide solace and happiness to others even if it meant they have to endure sufferance themselves. On the other hand, it is the natural habit of non-saints that they enjoy the suffering of others even if it does not lead to any gain for themselves.

The qualities of saints vis-à-vis non-saints have also been described in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 37—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 41.

Refer also specifically to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 41.

²Saints are compared to the Birch tree because the outer layer of this tree is torn off and beaten to a pulp to make paper, as well as clothes that were worn by sages and hermits in ancient times. In other words, saintly persons would prefer to subject themselves to the greatest of pains if their pain and suffering help others. The most stellar example of one such saint is king Dadhichi who had given his own bones to the Gods so that they can devise weapons from these bones so as to defeat the demons.]

सन इव खल पर बंधन करई । खाल कढ़ाई बिपति सहि मरई ॥ १७ ॥
खल बिनु स्वार्थ पर अपकारी । अहि मूषक इव सुनु उरगारी ॥ १८ ॥

sana iva khala para bandhana kara'ī. khāla karḥā'i bipati sahi mara'ī. 17.
khala binu svāratha para apakārī. ahi mūṣaka iva sunu uragārī. 18.

The wicked people with a pervert mind are like the hemp which is used as a rope to bind others; they would not mind getting their skin peeled-off if this causes harm to others inspite of the fact that this may result in their own death. (17)

Oh the Enemy of Serpents (uragārī—i.e. Garud)! A wicked and evil person is like a serpent or a rat who cause harm or injury to others even if this results in no personal gain or good for the¹. (18)

[Note—¹A rat has the habit of nibbling at household things and destroying stores without rhyme or reason. A snake would bite a person and kill him even if this does not benefit it in any way. Likewise, a vile person derives immense pleasure by seeing others suffering and wallowing in pain, and this seductive pleasure increases manifold if he becomes an instrument to inflict these torments. Instead of feeling a pang of guilt and empathy for those who are caused suffering due to him, and inspite of gaining nothing himself with the wicked act of his, an evil man feels happy and enjoys the sight of others overcome by pain and grief.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 40 in this context.]

पर संपदा बिनासि नसाहीं । जिमि ससि हति हिम उपल बिलाहीं ॥ १९ ॥
दुष्ट उदय जग आरति हेतू । जथा प्रसिद्ध अधम ग्रह केतू ॥ २० ॥

para sampadā bināsi nasāhīm. jimi sasi hati hima upala bilāhīm. 19.
duṣṭa udaya jaga ārati hētū. jathā prasid'dha adhama graha kētū. 20.

In fact, a person who is wicked, pervert and evil would not regret perishing himself after causing immense harm to others and destroying whatever they possess just like the hail that first destroys the crop standing in the field (of the farmer) and then perishes itself (by melting away)¹. (19)

The rise or ascendance or elevation of people who are wicked, vile, sinful and pervert is a harbinger of ill-fortune for the world at large like the rise of the comet in the sky (because a comet is regarded as a bad omen which brings in its wake natural calamities and other catastrophic events). (20)

[Note—¹The hail first batters the standing crop and destroys it, and then it melts away. Similarly, a vile person would enjoy destroying the wealth of others even if it means that he himself loses all that he has.]

संत उदय संतत सुखकारी । बिस्व सुखद जिमि इंदु तमारी ॥ २१ ॥
परम धर्म श्रुति बिदित अहिंसा । पर निंदा सम अघ न गरीसा ॥ २२ ॥

santa udaya santata sukhakārī. bisva sukhada jimi indu tamārī. 21.
parama dharma śruti bidita ahinsā. para nindā sama agha na garīsā. 22.

On the other hand, the rise or advancement of a saint is always the cause of universal joy, happiness and comfort in the world just like the rising of the moon and the sun (indu tamārī)¹ invariably brings joy and delight for the whole world. (21)

It is prescribed in the Vedas (which are the primary scriptures) that the best religious merit a person can acquire is to observe the vow of non-violence (ahinsā)². And (the same Vedas say that) speaking ill of others is a grave sin. (22)

[Note—¹The sun is called “tamārī” because it destroys darkness, or “Tama”.

²‘Ahinsa’ or non-violence here is invoked in all its connotations and aspects, such as physical, mental and emotional. It is not limited to abstaining from physical killing of a creature. It involves not doing anything that harms others and causes them pain and grief to them, even if it is done subtly and indirectly by one’s thoughts that plan harm of others or instructions given to a third person with respect to the person intended to be harmed, or overtly by one’s own offensive words, speech, actions and deeds done directly.]

हर गुर निंदक दादुर होई । जन्म सहस्र पाव तन सोई ॥ २३ ॥
द्विज निंदक बहु नरक भोग करि । जग जनमइ बायस सरीर धरि ॥ २४ ॥

hara gura nindaka dādura hōī. janma sahasra pāva tana sōī. 23.
dvija nindaka bahu naraka bhōga kari. jaga janama'i bāyasa sarīra dhari. 24.

{In the following few verses, the main idea expressed is that one must not speak ill of others.}

Those who speak ill of one’s Guru (moral preceptor; teacher and guide) and Lord Shiva (“Hara”) are born as a ‘frog’ in their next birth for countless generations.

[The word ‘frog’ is a derogatory term used for someone who croaks meaninglessly, is loathsome and lowly in life, and is a mentally dull and stupid.] (23)

Those who speak ill of Brahmins (representing the learned and wise people in the society) suffer in hell for a long time before they are born as a ‘crow’ on this earth.

[Like the frog, a crow is also loathed by the people and not liked by anyone. The crow’s crowing and the frog’s croaking are used as metaphors for the meaningless talk of those people who criticise their Guru, Lord Shiva and Brahmins. No wise man would pay heed to them.] (24)

सुर श्रुति निंदक जे अभिमानी । रौरव नरक परहिं ते प्रानी ॥ २५ ॥
होहिं उलूक संत निंदा रत । मोह निसा प्रिय ग्यान भानु गत ॥ २६ ॥

sura śruti nindaka jē abhimānī. raurava naraka parahim tē prānī. 25
hōhim ulūka santa nindā rata. mōha nisā priya gyāna bhānu gata. 26.

Those Jivas (creatures) who are proud of themselves and their knowledge, and haughtily criticise the Gods and the Vedas, they fall in the gravest of all hells known as 'Raurava'. (25)

Those who indulge in speaking ill of saints become an 'owl'. Such people are fond of the night symbolising Moha (darkness of delusions and ignorance leading to attachment and infatuation), and for them the sun symbolising wisdom and truth has set (faded away; they don't like it)¹. (26)

[Note—¹Like the frog and the crow used in previous verses, the owl is also a derogatory term used for a person who is exceptionally foolish. The owl comes out in the night, and it is believed that it can see only in the darkness of the night as the light of the sun makes it blind. In this metaphor, true wisdom and knowledge are like the 'light of the sun', and delusions and ignorance are like 'the darkness of the night'. A saint is like 'the sun' because he shows the path to wisdom, true knowledge, enlightenment and self-realisation, while those who criticise them are deemed to be non-saints who speak of things that push a man into a dark well of delusions and worldly attachments. Hence, those who speak ill of saints are like a person who suffers from some disease which makes him close his eyes in sunlight and open them only when it is dark. Such persons do not like wisdom and truth and find it hard to climb the hill of spirituality, but rather prefer to go spiritually downhill and enjoy the world and its sense objects.

Like the voice of the frog and the crow, the hooting of the owl is also paid no attention by any person, and in fact it is regarded as a bad omen. This sound of the owl speaking is synonymous with an eerie atmosphere dominated by evil spirits, ghosts and phantoms.]

सब कै निंदा जे जड़ करहीं । ते चमगादुर होइ अवतरहीं ॥ २७ ॥

सुनहु तात अब मानस रोगा । जिन्ह ते दुख पावहिं सब लोगा ॥ २८ ॥

saba kai nindā jē jaṛa karahīm. tē camagādura hō'i avatarahīm. 27.
sunahu tāta aba mānasa rōgā. jinha tē dukha pāvahīm saba lōgā. 28.

Those dumb-witted people who indulge in censuring others and speaking ill of one and all are born as 'bats' in their next lives. (27)

Now listen dear (sunahu tāta aba) about the mental and emotional ailments (mānasa rōgā) that afflict everyone and make them suffer. [This is the last question of Garud. Refer verse no. 7 herein above.] (28)

मोह सकल व्याधिन्ह कर मूला । तिन्ह ते पुनि उपजहिं बहु सूला ॥ २९ ॥

काम बात कफ लोभ अपारा । क्रोध पित्त नित छाती जारा ॥ ३० ॥

mōha sakala byādhinha kara mūlā. tinha tē puni upajahīm bahu sūlā. 29.
kāma bāta kapha lōbha apārā. krōdha pitta nita chātī jārā. 30.

‘Moha’ (attachment and infatuation with the world arising out of delusion and ignorance) is at the root of all such (mental and emotional as well as spiritual) diseases (or problems). From this single root arises many other problems that act as countless thorns (upajahiṃ bahu sūlā) for the creature¹. (29)

In this disease, ‘Kaam’ (passion and lust) is like the wind or flatulence formed inside the body (that makes a man feel bloated and fidgety) that causes rheumatism (pain and fever that makes a man very uneasy).

‘Lobha’ (greed and rapacity) is like the disturbed cough and mucous (that may create difficulty in breathing and makes a man feel suffocative).

‘Krodha’ (anger; wrathfulness; desire for revenge; fury) is like the excess of acids formed inside the body that cause heartburn and burning sensation in the abdomen². (30)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 70—to Doha no. 71 (a).

²When a person suffers from any of these disturbed elements in the body, he becomes very restless. He loses his patience and balance of mind, and takes irrational decisions in his bid to get rid of his problems. This is a metaphoric way of describing how a person who is overcome by such negative qualities as Moha, Kaam, Lobha and Krodha loses his wisdom and is driven by them to commit grave errors in life. These errors aggravate his spiritual problems instead of ameliorating them; they create a lot of hindrance in his spiritual path and rob him of all his peace and happiness.]

प्रीति करहिं जौं तीनिउ भाई । उपजइ सन्यपात दुखदाई ॥ ३१ ॥
बिषय मनोरथ दुर्गम नाना । ते सब सूल नाम को जाना ॥ ३२ ॥

prīti karahiṃ jaum̐ tīni'u bhā'ī. upaja'i san'yapāta dukhadā'ī. 31.
biṣaya manōratha durgama nānā. tē saba sūla nāma kō jānā. 32.

If these three elements join hands in a bond of ‘brotherhood’, the consequences are horrible for him, because they produce a fever marked by high temperature and delirium that makes the sick man suffer a lot¹. (31)

The desire to obtain the objects of sensual pleasure and comfort in the world and derive self-gratification from them is very hard to fulfil in its entirety. This unfulfilled or unrequited desire makes a man feel constantly miserable, and it sets off a chain reaction of sufferings, grief and misery. It is like the immense amount of suffering that a grave disease causes to a sick person; the disease assumes so many forms that it becomes difficult to even name (or diagnose) them². (32)

[Note—¹If Kaam, Lobha and Krodha act together and influence a person simultaneously, the problems are increased manifold times for him as compared to a situation where only one of these factors is disturbing his mind. Just like a sick person suffering from a host of ailments such as formation of flatulence, acid and cough, is made to suffer more if he develops high fever with delirium, a person who is

overwhelmed by all the three negative qualities is subjected to immense spiritual torments. His life becomes one big hell.

²If a man begins to expect happiness in the material world and thinks that the purpose of life is in the enjoyment of the sense objects of the world, then he will find himself in a cesspool filled with quicksand because he would want more and more of everything, and his lust will find no end which makes him spend his entire energy and time in acquiring the material things he yearns for. He will never feel contented with what he has but would want more and more of it. His peace of mind is lost; he suffers from constant anxiety and worries—first regarding how to get more, and then how to safeguard what he already has. Since the world is transient and perishable, since it is ever changing and mortal, whatever a person acquires after strenuous efforts is bound to decay and go away one day. This results in grief at its loss.

Similarly, if a man allows himself to become a victim of Moha, Kaam, Lobha and Krodha, his miseries and sufferings would multiply manifold times and would never end.]

ममता दादु कंडु इरषाई । हरष बिषाद गरह बहुताई ॥ ३३ ॥
पर सुख देखि जरनि सोइ छई । कुष्ट दुष्टता मन कुटिलई ॥ ३४ ॥

mamatā dādu kaṇḍu iraṣā'ī. haraṣa biṣāda garaha bahutā'ī. 33.
para sukha dēkhi jarani sō'i cha'ī. kuṣṭa duṣṭatā mana kuṭila'ī. 34.

‘Mamata’ (longing, infatuation, obsessiveness, attachment—that leads to the sense of ‘my’ or ‘mine’ with thing in this gross world) is like a skin disease called ringworm. In this disease, ‘Irshya’ (jealously and malice) is like the severe itch that it produces¹.

‘Harsha and Vishad’ (feeling joy in fulfilment of desires, and grief when they can’t be realised) are like the various diseases of the throat (such as sore throat, diphtheria, mumps, ulceration and boils, swollen glands as goitre and tonsillitis, and so on). (33)

The sense of jealousy and grudge that one harbours in one’s heart when he sees others happy and prosperous is like the wasting disease known as tuberculosis².

The wickedness and pervert nature of the mind is like leprosy³. (34)

[Note—¹The ringworm itches intensely, and it constantly attracts attention. Likewise, a person will be always thinking of those things which he loves and yearns for. His misery is increased when he is jealous of others who possess things that he longs for. This longing would prevent him from thinking of anything else. He would not even worry about his own fate and spiritual welfare if he becomes too obsessive with the world and its material things.

²This disease slowly eats away into the flesh and makes a man very weak in due course of time. Likewise, if a person is jealous of others, if he keeps grudges against others, he would gradually lose all his mental peace to become sick in body and mind.

³Again, like tuberculosis, leprosy is a grave and incurable disease. It also makes a man extremely weak and fragile. Further, a patient suffering from either tuberculosis

or leprosy is shunned by others in the society. Similarly, if a person harbours jealousy and malice for others, if he keeps grudges in his heart for all, then no one would like to keep his company. He will be detested and hated by the society. Surely, this situation would make life hell for him just as these two grave diseases make life hell for those who suffer from them.]

अहंकार अति दुखद डमरुआ । दंभ कपट मद मान नेहरुआ ॥ ३५ ॥
तृन्ना उदरबृद्धि अति भारी । त्रिबिधि ईषना तरुन तिजारी ॥ ३६ ॥

ahaṅkāra ati dukhada ḍamaru'ā. dambha kapaṭa mada māna nēharu'ā. 35.
tṛṣṇā udarabr̥d'dhi ati bhārī. tribidhi īṣanā taruna tijārī. 36.

‘Ahankar’ (arrogance, ego, pride, haughtiness) is like the disease of the joints (arthritis) that makes a man stiffened and feel extremely miserable with a lot of pain¹.

‘Dambha’ and ‘Kapat’ ((deceit, conceit, perversions, pretensions,) as well as ‘Mada’ and ‘Maana’ (arrogance, haughtiness, vanity, hypocrisy, and a false sense of pride and ego) are like the many diseases of the nerves and veins. (35)

‘Trishna’ (yearning for the material things of the world; longing for self-gratification; thirst for enjoyment of the senses) is like the horrible disease known as dropsy.

Strong desire for the three things of this world (i.e. son, wealth and honour) is like the quartan ague fever (an intermittent type of malaria that recurs every third day)². (36)

[Note—¹To wit, just like arthritis makes movements of limbs difficult, a man who is filled with ego and pride becomes stubborn and rigid in his approach to everything due to his arrogance and haughty nature. Such a person cannot imbibe knowledge and improve himself because of his stubbornness and inflexibility. He would not listen to any advice, and would stick to his ways no matter how wrong they are.

²This is a recurring form of fever that comes every third day. So therefore, if a person is obsessed with his son, wealth and honour in this world, these three combine to cause him recurrent sorrow, misery and grief, one after another. If a person is able to overcome one type of sorrow, he is quickly overwhelmed by another.]

जुग बिधि ज्वर मत्सर अबिबेका । कहँ लगि कहौँ कुरोग अनेका ॥ ३७ ॥

juga bidhi jvara matsara abibēkā. kaham̃ lagi kahaum̃ kurōga anēkā. 37.

‘Matsarya’ (jealousy and malice) and ‘Aviveka’ (lack of wisdom and intelligent thinking; irrationality) are like the two forms of fever (such as typhoid and hay fevers)¹.

In this way, there are countless other mental and emotional diseases which are too many to be mentioned. (37)

[Note—¹Already different types of fevers have been cited. These two additional fevers add to a person's woes. So here it would mean a combination of any two types of miseries and sorrows that torment a person in any given point of time in his life. This simply means that if a man has the negative qualities of Matsarya and Avivek in him, his sufferings would be doubled.]

दो०. एक व्याधि बस नर मरहिं ए असाधि बहु व्याधि ।
पीड़हिं संतत जीव कहूँ सो किमि लहै समाधि ॥ १२१ (क) ॥
dōhā.

ēka byādhi basa nara maraḥim ē asādhi bahu byādhi.
pīṛaḥim santata jīva kahum̐ sō kimi lahai samādhi. 121 (a).

Even any one disease is enough to kill a man, but here there are countless incurable diseases that continuously torment a creature (Jīva). Say, in this situation how can a person ever find calmness of mind and peace for himself like the sort that is obtained when one does meditation and enters a tranquil and steady state of mind known as Samadhi¹? (Doha no. 121-a)

[Note—¹Samadhi is a state of existence of consciousness that is attained in the higher stages of meditation, a stage called 'Turiya'. Here the mind is free from all disturbances arising out of the sensory inputs from the external world. It is a state marked by complete and total tranquillity and peace. If a person is suffering from so many symbolic spiritual diseases as outlined herein above, it is impossible that he would be able to meditate peacefully in the first place, and therefore attainment of Samadhi and its accompanying state of blissfulness is out of the question.]

नेम धर्म आचार तप ग्यान जग्य जप दान ।
भेषज पुनि कोटिन्ह नहिं रोग जाहिं हरिजान ॥ १२१ (ख) ॥

nēma dharma ācāra tapa gyāna jagya japa dāna.
bhēṣaja puni kōṭinha naḥim rōga jāḥim harijāna. 121 (b).

There are indeed countless remedies for these spiritual ailments, such as observance of certain vows and religious sacraments (nēma), following an auspicious path of righteousness, propriety, probity and noble conduct (dharma), inculcating good virtues, practicing morality and developing an excellent character (ācāra), doing penance and austerity (tapa), acquiring true knowledge and wisdom (gyāna), doing sacrifices and meditation (jagya), repeating the holy Mantras (spiritual formulas such as the divine name of the Lord God— japa), making charities and giving donations and alms (dāna), and so on and so forth.

But, oh the devotee of Lord Hari and his great mount ("harijāna"—i.e. Garud), none of them can cure these diseases from the root; none of them is powerful enough to neutralise the horrifying consequences of these spiritual ailments. (Doha no. 121-b)

चौ०. एहि बिधि सकल जीव जग रोगी । सोक हरष भय प्रीति बियोगी ॥ १ ॥
मानस रोग कछुक मैं गाए । हहिं सब कें लखि बिरलेन्ह पाए ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

ēhi bidhi sakala jīva jaga rōgī. sōka haraṣa bhaya prīti biyōgī. 1.
mānasa rōga kachuka mair̃ gā'ē. hahir̃ saba kēm lakhi biralēnha pā'ē. 2.

In this way (as described in the previous verses), every Jiva (creature; living being) is afflicted with so many ailments and suffering constantly from them. Their woes are exacerbated further by the constant tossing of waves of grief caused by the separation from a dear one whom one loves much, or even the fear of such separation, and the joy of meeting someone whom one loves much, or the expectation of such a meeting¹. (1)

I (Kaagbhusund) have enumerated some of the spiritual and emotional ailments that afflict all the creatures; no one is an exception to it. But the irony is that though every single living being suffers from them to some extent, it is rare for someone to recognise these ailments and endeavour to find a correct remedy for a particular disease that afflicts him. (2)

[Note—¹To wit, the creature is already suffering internally from so much emotional turmoil that his mind and soul can never find rest and peace. His torments are aggravated further by external factors of grief and fear of hate on the one hand, and happiness and expectations of love on the other hand that whatever traces of peace that are left over for him are also eliminated. As a result of this unfortunate situation, the poor creature is left bobbling up and down in the crests and troughs of elation and joy on the one end, and depression and dejection on the other end like a helpless piece of wood left adrift on the surface of an ocean that is violently choppy.

²A similar idea is expressed in Tulsidas' excellent Book of Prayers known as 'Vinai Patrika', in its verse no. 81. An English version of this wonderful book has been published separately by the author of this present book.]

जाने ते छीजहिं कछु पापी । नास न पावहिं जन परितापी ॥ ३ ॥
बिषय कुपथ्य पाइ अंकुरे । मुनिहु हृदयँ का नर बापुरे ॥ ४ ॥

jānē tē chījahir̃ kachu pāpī. nāsa na pāvahir̃ jana paritāpī. 3.
biṣaya kupathya pā'i āṅkurē. munihu hṛdayam̃ kā nara bāpurē. 4.

If one recognises or becomes aware of these cruel tormentors of a creature which cause endless heartburn for him, their negative effects are somewhat reduced, but not completely eliminated.

[When one becomes aware of these spiritual problems, he takes precautionary measures and guards himself against them. The result is they become less painful and less horrifying. But they are not eradicated from their roots.] (3)

These spiritual and emotional ailments thrive on carelessness or ignorance on the part of a creature. Like any other latent disease that is aggravated by not taking proper precaution against it, or if the person suffering from it does not restrain himself from eating such food as would stoke the dormant disease and revive it, these spiritual ailments are stoked by indulgence in enjoyment of pleasures of the sense objects of the world and getting hooked to them.

Even a learned sage or an exalted hermit who loses his guard in this respect is attacked by these spiritual tormentors that strike a root in his heart. If this can happen to a sage and a hermit, what can be said of ordinary creature¹?

So, is there a way out of this quandary? Yes, there is, and that way is advised in the next verse herein below.] (4)

[Note—¹If wise sages and self-realised hermits aren't spared from the effect of countless spiritual problems enumerated in the aforesaid verses, if they find it difficult to overcome their natural urges for enjoyment of sensual pleasure, it is almost impossible for ordinary creatures to do so. In short, it is extremely difficult to fight these enemies by relying upon one's own strength.

राम कृपाँ नासहिं सब रोगा । जौं एहि भाँति बनै संयोगा ॥ ५ ॥
सदगुर बैद बचन बिस्वासा । संजम यह न बिषय कै आसा ॥ ६ ॥

rāma kṛpāṁ nāsaḥiṁ saba rōgā. jaum̐ ēhi bhām̐ti banai sanyōgā. 5.
sadagura baida bacana bisvāsā. sañjama yaha na biṣaya kai āsā. 6.

All these diseases can be eliminated by the grace of Lord Ram. The Lord's kindness creates a favourable combination of circumstances as described in brief now, which together help the creature to eradicate this disease. (5)

[The various fortunate circumstances are now listed.] One must have faith in the words of his wise Guru (moral preceptor and advisor) who is true himself and has truthful knowledge (*sadagura*). Such a Guru represents a doctor who helps the patient to overcome his disease¹.

Both the aspirant and his preceptor should not desire anything from the world; neither of them should find attraction in the sense objects of the world nor expect to derive enjoyment, comfort and pleasure from them. This is the observance of proper precaution and a symbolic regimen of diet that helps to fight the virus of the disease². (6)

[Note—¹When a person falls sick, the primary step is to find a competent doctor who is an expert in his field; not a quack who would kill the patient. Once a good doctor is found, the patient must trust him even as he leaves his life in the doctor's hands. The doctor is the person who knows best what to do and how to cure the disease; the patient should not override the doctor's advice if he wants to cure himself, but follow his instructions faithfully. Likewise, once a good and true Guru is found, the spiritual aspirant should diligently follow the advice given by the Guru.

²To wit, one should practice the glorious virtue of self-restraint in its entirety if one wishes to eradicate his spiritual problems from their roots. Refer verse no. 4 in this

context. This verse implies that one of the signs of a good Guru is that he practices what he preaches.]

रघुपति भगति सजीवन मूरी । अनूपान श्रद्धा मति पूरी ॥ ७ ॥
एहि बिधि भलेहिं सो रोग नसाहीं । नाहिं त जतन कोटि नहिं जाहीं ॥ ८ ॥

raghupati bhagati sajīvana mūrī. anūpāna śrad'dhā mati pūrī. 7.
ēhi bidhi bhalēhiṁ sō rōga nasāhīṁ. nāhiṁ ta jatana kōṭi nahīṁ jāhīṁ. 8.

Devotion for and worship of Lord Raghupati (Lord Ram) is like the life-giving herb known as 'Sanjivani' that is used a recipe to treat the disease¹.

A devout mind and an intellect that is infused with faith and belief in the Lord is the medium by which the remedy is administered². (7)

[Note—¹This herb has a magical power to revive a person even if he is on the death-bed. It has tremendous rejuvenating potentials. To wit, devotion for and worship of Lord Ram acts as the chief medicine to treat one's spiritual torments.

²Even in modern medicine, some medium is employed to administer the basic drug or its necessary ingredients to the patient. It may be in the form of a tablet or a capsule or a liquid that is taken orally, or some form of a liquid that is injected directly in the blood. But a medium is needed nonetheless; raw drug can't be administered to the patient. In this metaphor, a devout mind that has faith in the Lord God is the medium by which worship and devotion is made possible.]

This is the way (as outlined herein above) by which these diseases can be eradicated; otherwise there is no chance at all even by making countless other types of efforts. (8)

जानिअ तब मन बिरुज गोसाँई । जब उर बल बिराग अधिकाई ॥ ९ ॥
सुमति छुधा बाढ़इ नित नई । बिषय आस दुर्बलता गई ॥ १० ॥

jāni'a taba mana biruja gōsāmī. jaba ura bala birāga adhikāī. 9.
sumati chudhā bārha'i nita naī. biṣaya āsa durbalatā gaī. 10.

Oh Lord (gōsāmī)! One should regard the Mana (mind and sub-conscious) as being free from all diseases (emotional and spiritual problems) when these symptoms manifest themselves: The virtue of 'Vairagya' (renunciation, detachment, dispassion) is strengthened (becomes firmly rooted) in one's heart [9]; the intellect that is pure and free from all corruptions and taints ignites appetite (desire) for acquisition of wisdom and true knowledge; and weakness in the form of desire for enjoyment of the sensual pleasures of the world is overcome [10]¹. (9-10)

[Note—¹When the proper medicine is administered to a patient he begins to recover from his disease. Here since this disease is not a physical disease of the body but problems of the mind and heart that affect the spiritual well-being of a creature, the three chief signs that indicate that he is progressing satisfactorily are listed in these

two verses. When a person is sick he loses his hunger; when he is cured the first sign is reappearance of his appetite. So likewise, when a person is overcome with spiritual problems, he loses all interest in wisdom and self-realisation. When he recovers from his fallen position, he once again begins to pursue the path of wisdom and knowledge. The virtue of renunciation helps him in this path. The temptations of the world acted as a drag upon his progress, but once he is wisened he overcomes this hurdle too.]

बिमल ग्यान जल जब सो नहाई । तब रह राम भगति उर छाई ॥ ११ ॥
 सिव अज सुक सनकादिक नारद । जे मुनि ब्रह्म बिचार बिसारद ॥ १२ ॥
 सब कर मत खगनायक एहा । करिअ राम पद पंकज नेहा ॥ १३ ॥
 श्रुति पुरान सब ग्रंथ कहाहीं । रघुपति भगति बिना सुख नाही ॥ १४ ॥

bimala gyāna jala jaba sō nahā'ī. taba raha rāma bhagati ura chā'ī. 11.
 siva aja suka sanakādika nārada. jē muni brahma bicāra bisārada. 12.
 saba kara mata khaganāyaka ēhā. kari'a rāma pada paṅkaja nēhā. 13.
 śruti purāna saba grantha kahāhīm. raghupati bhagati binā sukha nāhīm. 14.

In this way, when the creature finally recovers from his spiritual and emotional diseases, he would need to take a symbolic bath to clean and freshen himself just in the manner of a person who needs to take a bath after he recovers from a long-drawn fever which lasted for a long period of time.

The water needed for this symbolic bath (of spiritual rejuvenation) is in the form of wisdom, true knowledge, enlightenment and self-realisation (**bimala gyāna jala**). Having bathed and refreshed himself thus, the aspirant feels spiritual rejuvenated as he finds devotion and affection for Lord Ram spreading and covering the whole of his heart. (11)

Lord Shiva, the creator Brahma (**aja**), sage Suka (the parrot saint), the celestial sages Sankadi and Narad, and other such exalted sages who are experts in the knowledge of Brahm (the Supreme Being) --- (12)

--- It is their unanimous view, oh the king of birds (**khaganāyaka**), that one should have devotion and affection for the lotus-like holy feet of Lord Ram. (13)

The Vedas, the Purans and all other scriptures unequivocally assert that there is no happiness and peace without having devotion (Bhakti) for Lord Ram. (14)

कमठ पीठ जामहिं बरु बारा । बंध्या सुत बरु काहुहि मारा ॥ १५ ॥
 फूलहिं नभ बरु बहुबिधि फूला । जीव न लह सुख हरि प्रतिकूला ॥ १६ ॥

kamaṭha pīṭha jāmahiṁ baru bārā. bandhyā suta baru kāhuhi mārā. 15.
 phūlahiṁ nabha baru bahubidhi phūlā. jīva na laha sukha hari pratikūlā. 16.

It may be remotely possible that hairs grow on the back of a tortoise, or a son born of a barren woman (who cannot produce children), or many types of flowers bloom in

the sky¹—but it is absolutely impossible for a Jiva (creature) to find happiness and peace by turning away or being opposed to Lord Hari (i.e. Lord Ram). (15-16)

[Note—¹These three things are impossible to happen. But even if by some remotest of a miraculous chance these things can materialise, still it is impossible to have peace and happiness by turning against the Lord God. To wit, in all sooth and without gainsay in the least, it is certain that if one does not have devotion for Lord God he cannot have happiness and peace in his life no matter what he does to achieve them; there is no doubt about it.

The same idea is expressed in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 115.]

Other instances are given below to stress this point.]

तृषा जाइ बरु मृगजल पाना । बरु जामहिं सस सीस बिषाना ॥ १७ ॥
अंधकारु बरु रबिहि नसावै । राम बिमुख न जीव सुख पावै ॥ १८ ॥

tr̥ṣā jā'i baru mṛgajala pānā. baru jāmahiṁ sasa sīsa biṣānā. 17.
andhakāru baru rabihi nasāvai. rāma bimukha na jīva sukha pāvai. 18.

Again, it may be remotely possible to quench one's thirst by drinking water seen in a desert mirage, or horns grow on the head of a rabbit, or darkness of the night destroys the light of the sun and eclipse it (which are impossible things)¹—but it is absolutely impossible for a Jiva (creature) to find happiness and peace by turning away or being opposed to Lord Ram. (17-18)

[Note—¹Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 72.]

हिम ते अनल प्रगट बरु होई । बिमुख राम सुख पाव न कोई ॥ १९ ॥

hima tē anala pragaṭa baru hō'ī. bimukha rāma sukha pāva na kō'ī. 19.

Yet again, it may be remotely possible that fire erupts from ice—but it is absolutely impossible to be happy and peaceful by turning against or be opposed to Lord Ram (i.e. not having devotion, affection and faith in the Lord; not submitting to the Lord and worshipping him). (19)

दो०. बारि मथें घृत होइ बरु सिकता ते बरु तेल ।
बिनु हरि भजन न भव तरिअ यह सिद्धांत अपेल ॥ १२२ (क) ॥
dōhā.

bāri mathēm ghr̥ta hō'i baru sikatā tē baru tēla.
binu hari bhajana na bhava tari'a yaha sid'dhānta apēla. 122 (a).

[Other impossible things are cited here.] It may be remotely possible to extract clarified butter (known as Ghee) by churning water, or oil by crushing sand particles (like one can extract oil by crushing the seeds of sesame or any other oil-bearing plant)—but it is absolutely impossible to cross this vast and intractable ocean-like world of transmigration without worshipping (and having devotion for) Lord Hari (i.e. Lord Ram)¹. This is an inviolable principle, and there is no exception to it. (Doha no. 122-a)

[Note—¹Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 90 where a similar idea is expressed.]

मसकहि करइ बिरंचि प्रभु अजहि मसक ते हीन ।
अस बिचारि तजि संसय रामहि भजहिं प्रबीन ॥ १२२ (ख) ॥

masakahī kara'i birañci prabhu ajahi masaka tē hīna.
asa bicāri taji sansaya rāmahi bhajahim prabīna. 122 (b).

The almighty, omnipotent and all-able Lord God (Sri Ram) can transform the humblest of creatures like a mosquito into someone as exalted, honourable and great as the Creator known as Biranchi (Lord Brahma, the first of the Trinity of Gods), and at the same time can degrade Brahma into a lowly and inconsequential form of a mosquito.

Keeping this in mind, a wise and clever person is one who abandons all doubts and confusions in this regard, and instead concentrates on worshipping and having devotion for Lord Ram. (Doha no. 122-b)

श्लोक. विनिश्चितं वदामि ते न अन्यथा वचांसि मे ।
हरिं नरा भजन्ति येऽतिदुस्तरं तरन्ति ते ॥ १२२ (ग) ॥

ślōka.

vinīścitaṁ vadāmi tē na an'yathā vacānsi mē.
hariṁ narā bhajanti yē 'tidustaraṁ taranti tē. 122 (c).

I (Kaagbhusund) advice you (Garud) about a principle that is sacrosanct as I have thoroughly tested and verified it to be true, inviolable and unchallengable—and my words are true and honest—that those creatures who worship and have devotion for Lord Hari (Sri Ram) can very easily cross over this formidable ocean-like world of transmigration that is otherwise impossible to cross. (Shloka no. 122-c)

[Note—This is actually the third part of Doha no. 122, but since it is in the Sanskrit language it is named as a 'Shloka'.]

चौ०. कहेउँ नाथ हरि चरित अनूपा । व्यास समास स्वमति अनुरूपा ॥ १ ॥

श्रुति सिद्धांत इहइ उरगारी । राम भजिअ सब काज बिसारी ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

kahe'um^o nātha hari carita anūpā. byāsa samāsa svamati anurūpā. 1.
śruti sid'dhānta iha'i uragārī. rāma bhaji'a saba kāja bisārī. 2.

[The saintly crow Kaagbhusund said to Garud—] Oh Lord (nātha)! I have narrated to you—sometimes in detail and at other times in brief, and in accordance to my understanding and intelligence—the most fascinating, wonderful, pleasant and charming story of Lord Hari (i.e. Lord Sri Ram) that is incomparable to any other (in its quotient of divinity, holiness and sacredness). (1)

Oh the Enemy of Serpents (uragārī)! All the Vedas are unanimous in their view and conclude that one should abandon all other religious duties and worship Lord Ram instead¹. (2)

[Note—¹To wit, a wise and clever person is one who does not allow confusions and uncertainties to cloud his mind as to which is the best spiritual path for him. The scriptures have addressed this question for him by asserting that the best and the easiest path by which one can reach one's spiritual destination in life is to offer worship to Lord Ram, have unflinching faith and devotion for the Lord, and submit oneself to the Lord and ask for his grace.

Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 220; (ii) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 240; (b) Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 23; (c) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 127.]

प्रभु रघुपति तजि सेइअ काही । मोहि से सठ पर ममता जाही ॥ ३ ॥

तुम्ह बिग्यानरूप नहिं मोहा । नाथ कीन्हि मो पर अति छोहा ॥ ४ ॥

prabhu raghupati taji sē'i'a kāhī. mōhi sē saṭha para mamatā jāhī. 3.
tumha bigyānarūpa nahim mōhā. nātha kīnhi mō para ati chōhā. 4.

Say, who else should one have devotion for and faith in, who else should one worship and submit oneself to other than Lord Raghupati (one of the many names of Lord Ram) who has been so selflessly graceful, benevolent and kind upon such a humble and good-for-nothing creature as me (Kaagbhusund)?¹ (3)

Oh Lord (“nātha”—Garud)! You are wise and intelligent (because you are the ‘king of birds’, and a king is deemed to be the most senior person in his realm in all respects).

Surely, there is no delusion in you, and you are not ignorant either. You have been very gracious upon me by showing me such high honour (by coming to my humble hermitage and giving me the honour and respect I don't deserve by praising me and treating me as a wise soul who can give you spiritual guidance, and then patiently hearing what advice I had to give you). [For this kind act of yours, I express my gratitude and sincere thanks.] (4)

[Note—¹To wit, every Lord or Master favours a servant or subordinate from whom he expects something in return by way of service. Say, who would show affection for a worthless servant just because the latter has surrendered completely to his Lord or Master and has nowhere else to go? In all sooth and without the least gainsay, I can vouch with a raised hand and under oath that there is one such Lord, and he is 'Lord Ram'. Tell me, what service am I doing to the Lord? I am a crow by body, and I can't even offer sacrifices to him, or do proper form of worship. I can only remember the Lord and tell his divine story to other birds. That is all I can do. But still the Lord has blessed me with eternal peace, happiness, bliss and beatitude, and I feel completely contented.

I am not even an expert in the scriptures, nor do I do meditation or fire sacrifices, or observe any other religious vows and sacraments. Still Lord Ram has been so gracious and affectionate towards me. What more would a creature want?

A similar idea is expressed by Hanuman when he met Vibhishan, the younger brother of Ravana, the demon king of Lanka, in Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 7.]

पूँछिहु राम कथा अति पावनि । सुक सनकादि संभु मन भावनि ॥ ५ ॥
सत संगति दुर्लभ संसारा । निमिष दंड भरि एकउ बारा ॥ ६ ॥

pūm'chihu rāma kathā ati pāvani. suka sanakādi sambhu mana bhāvani. 5.
sata saṅgati durlabha sansārā. nimiṣa daṇḍa bhari ēka'u bārā. 6.

You have granted me a rare privilege and an exceptional honour by asking me to narrate the story of Lord Ram which is most sacred, divine and holy. This story is very dear to the heart of such exalted souls as sages Shuka (the parrot-saint who is believed to be the son of the legendary sage Veda Vyas and a narrator of the Srimad Bhagwat Mahapurāṇa), Sankadi (the seven celestial sages said to be sons of the creator Brahma), and Lord Shiva (the wisest amongst the Gods and the third God of the Trinity). (5)

It is rare for someone to have company of good saints for a short while even for once in this world¹. (6)

[Note—¹To wit, availability of true saints are rare in this world, and even if they are available it is rare to have an opportunity to be in their company for some period of time so as to gain something worthwhile from them. This is because a person is so busy in his routine affairs of life that he can hardly spare some time to spend with saints.]

देखु गरुड़ निज हृदयँ बिचारी । मैं रघुबीर भजन अधिकारी ॥ ७ ॥
सकुनाधम सब भाँति अपावन । प्रभु मोहि कीन्ह बिदित जग पावन ॥ ८ ॥

dēkhu garuṛa nija hṛdayam' bicārī. maiṁ raghubīra bhajana adhikārī. 7.
sakunādhama saba bhām'ti apāvana. prabhu mōhi kīnha bidita jaga pāvana.

8.

Oh Garud, think deeply and reflect in your heart. Am I in any way worthy of being a devotee of Lord Ram and worship the Lord because I am born as a lowly fellow (a crow) who is the lowest in the hierarchy of birds, and is regarded as being the most unholy and vile amongst their fraternity?

But inspite of this (i.e. though I am incompetent and ineligible to preach spiritual messages), the Lord (Sri Ram) has been so gracious, magnanimous and benevolent upon me that he has elevated me to an exalted stature where I am honoured as the one who has purified the world and cleansed it of its (spiritual) impurities (by being a medium of spreading the divine story of Lord Ram and explaining its hidden message by advising others to worship the Lord and have devotion for him as a means of spiritual fulfilment and attainment of purification of the soul)¹. (7-8)

[Note—¹“To wit, if the Lord can be so nice to a humble creature like me, surely and without gainsay he will also be gracious upon you, Garud, who is an exalted bird as you serve Lord Vishnu as his vehicle, and also because you are a King of the kingdom of birds. Further, if the Lord can show so much affection for a crow who is normally treated with contempt by others, just imagine how much love and affection would the Lord shower upon those creatures who are higher up in the evolutionary ladder. But still a Jiva, the living being, is so foolish that he neglects the Lord!”]

दो०. आजु धन्य मैं धन्य अति जद्यपि सब बिधि हीन ।

निज जन जानि राम मोहि संत समागम दीन ॥ १२३ (क) ॥

dōhā.

āju dhan'ya mair̥ dhan'ya ati jadyapi saba bidhi hīna.
nija jana jāni rāma mōhi santa samāgama dīna. 123 (a).

Though I (Kaagbhusund) am lowly and unworthy by all counts, yet I feel so honoured and privileged today that the gracious Lord (Ram) treated me as ‘his very own devotee and a dear follower’ by granting me the rare opportunity to have an exalted company of a saintly soul like you (Garud). For this grace of the Lord I thank him repeatedly, I thank you also repeatedly, and at the same time I feel exceptionally blessed and privileged myself. (Doha no. 123-a)

[Note—A similar emotion has been expressed by Vibhishan, the younger brother of Ravana, the demon king of Lanka, when Hanuman met him after landing on the soil of the city in search of Sita, the abducted wife of Lord Ram. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-4 that precede Doha no. 7.

This is followed by Hanuman’s expression of gratitude for Lord Ram in almost a similar language in Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 7—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 8.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, (i) Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2 and 16 that precede Doha no. 10 with respect to sage Sutikshan; and (ii) Sundar Kand, Doha no. 14 and Chaupai line no. 1 that follows it where Sita has extended her blessing to Hanuman when she realised that he is a sincere devotee of Lord Ram.]

नाथ जथामति भाषेउँ राखेउँ नहिं कछु गोइ ।
चरित सिंधु रघुनायक थाह कि पावइ कोइ ॥ १२३ (ख) ॥

nātha jathāmati bhāṣē'um' rākhē'um' nahim kachu gō'i.
carita sindhu raghunāyaka thāha ki pāva'i kō'i. 123 (b).

Oh Lord (nātha)! I have narrated the divine, holy and sacred story of Lord Ram in accordance to my intellect and understanding. I have not concealed anything I am aware of. But nevertheless, remember this point: the story of Lord Ram (who is also known by the name of Raghunayak) is like a huge ocean which no one can fathom and measure. No one can claim to know it in its entirety.

[Therefore, though I have tried to narrate it in detail and in the best possible way I could, yet I can't claim that my narration is exhaustive or comprehensive.]
(Doha no. 123-b)

चौ०. सुमिरि राम के गुन गन नाना । पुनि पुनि हरष भुसुंड़ि सुजाना ॥ १ ॥
महिमा निगम नेति करि गाई । अतुलित बल प्रताप प्रभुताई ॥ २ ॥
caupāī.

sumiri rāma kē guna gana nānā. puni puni haraṣa bhusuṇḍi sujānā. 1.
mahimā nigama nēti kari gāī. atulita bala pratāpa prabhutāī. 2.

The erudite and sagacious Kaagbhusund felt extremely exhilarated and thrilled by remembering the countless stupendous glories of Lord Ram as well as the Lord's profound grace upon him. (1)

He (Kaagbhusund) further said—‘The Lord's glories, powers, authority, majesty, greatness, holiness and divinity are so profound and endless that even the Vedas could not fathom them when they concluded by saying “Neti-Neti”—i.e. “not this, not this”, or “neither this nor that is sufficient to describe the Lord”¹. (2)

[Note—¹To wit, the Vedas declared that they are incapable to enumerate all the majestic glories and mystical qualities of Lord Ram, and therefore what they say of the Lord is just indicative of his divinity and holiness, but not an exhaustive account of it. No one should be foolish enough to conclude that the words of praise for the Lord by the Vedas are complete in themselves because there is much more to the Lord than what the Vedas or any other scriptures manage to say about him.

The scriptures tried their best to enumerate and define the glories, the greatness and the majesty of Lord Ram, but no matter how hard they tried they found that whatever they said was like just scratching on the surface of the Lord's stupendity and profoundness. They discovered that their utterances were utterly insufficient to describe even a fraction of the Lord's cosmic majesty and astounding glories. So they surrendered and concluded that all they managed to say of the Lord is not the entire truth about the Lord but only an indication of what the Lord actually is.

Therefore, the phrase “Neti-Neti” means that all the glories that the Vedas narrate about the Lord are just indicative in nature of how great and majestic the Lord is, but they are not exhaustive in themselves, as much more is to be said of the Lord which even these Vedas do not know about.

It would be highly mistaken for anyone to think that since the Vedas are repository of wisdom and knowledge hence their utterances about the Lord God are exhaustive in nature, for they fail to realise that the same Vedas have declared their limitations about the knowledge of the Lord by saying “Neti-Neti”. What the Vedas say of the Lord is like the tip of the iceberg, for much remains to be said and known about the Lord which the Vedas aren’t capable of.

Lord Ram is the Supreme Being who is beyond the imagination of the mind. All descriptions and all adjective use words, and these words are totally incompetent, inapt and insufficient to describe something that goes beyond the wildest of imaginations of the man. Words cannot restrict an unrestricted entity within the parameter of their meanings and connotations and interpretations.]

सिव अज पूज्य चरन रघुराई । मो पर कृपा परम मृदुलाई ॥ ३ ॥
अस सुभाउ कहूँ सुनउँ न देखउँ । केहि खगेस रघुपति सम लेखउँ ॥ ४ ॥

siva aja pūjya carana raghurā'ī. mō para kṛpā parama mṛdulā'ī. 3.
asa subhā'u kahum̃ suna'um̃ na dēkha'um̃. kēhi khagēsa raghupati sama
lēkha'um̃. 4.

The holy feet of Lord Ram (Raghurai) are worshipped and revered by Lord Shiva (the concluder of creation) and Lord Brahma (the creator). I am so fortunate and privileged that the same all-mighty Supreme Lord (Sri Ram) has been so kind, gracious and benevolent upon me. (3)

I have not seen or heard about such a sweet and kind nature of any other Lord or Master anywhere else.

Hence, oh the king of birds (khagēsa), who else can I compare Lord Raghupati (Sri Ram) with¹? (4)

[Note—¹To wit, I have reflected deeply in this regard and have concluded that no other God or Lord is as kind, gracious, merciful, benevolent and magnanimous as Lord Ram is in this entire creation. Hence, whom should I worship and before whom should I surrender myself except Lord Ram—tell me yourself?

In Tulsidas’ wonderful Book of Prayers known as “Vinai Patrika”, verse no. 135, Lord Ram’s gracious nature has been described.]

साधक सिद्ध बिमुक्त उदासी । कबि कोबिद कृतग्य संन्यासी ॥ ५ ॥
जोगी सूर सुतापस ग्यानी । धर्म निरत पंडित बिग्यानी ॥ ६ ॥

sādhaka sid'dha bimukta udāsī. kabi kōbida kṛtagya sann'yāsī. 5.
jōgī sūra sutāpasa gyānī. dharma nirata paṇḍita bigyānī. 6.

{In the following verses, Kaagbhusund emphasises the fact that no one can ever hope to find liberation and deliverance for himself from the cycle of birth and death, or emancipation and salvation of his soul, if he does not worship Lord Ram, have faith in and devotion for the Lord, and surrenders himself before him to seek the Lord's grace and mercy.}

Those who are spiritual aspirants and seekers of Truth (*sādhaka*), those who are mystics and possess special mystical powers and authority (*sid'dha*), those who are wise ones who have renounced all their attachments and lead a life of total dispassion (*bimukta udāsī*), those who are learned, erudite and sagacious (*kabi kōbida*), those who are experts in rituals (*kṛtagya*), those who have renounced all attachments with their families and focus their attention on self-realisation and acquisition of spiritual wisdom and enlightenment (*sann'yāsī*), those who are ascetics and practice meditation and contemplation (*jōgī*), those who regard themselves as powerful and able in all respects (*sūra*), those who pride themselves in doing penance and austerities (*sutāpasa*), those who regard themselves as wise, enlightened and self-realised (*gyānī*), those who are noble and follow the auspicious path of righteousness, probity and propriety (*dharma nirata*), those who are expert in the knowledge of the scriptures (*paṇḍita*), those who are intelligent and wise (*bigyānī*) --- (5-6)

तरहिं न बिनु सेएँ मम स्वामी । राम नमामि नमामि नमामी ॥ ७ ॥
सरन गएँ मो से अघ रासी । होहिं सुद्ध नमामि अबिनासी ॥ ८ ॥

tarahim na binu sē'ēm̐ mama svāmī. rāma namāmi namāmi namāmī. 7.
sarana ga'ēm̐ mō sē agha rāsī. hōhim sud'dha namāmi abināsī. 8.

--- Forsooth and without and gainsay, (I can unequivocally assert that) none of them can cross this symbolic ocean of birth-and-death (i.e. the ever-turning cycle of transmigration that traps a creature in this creation and causes so much suffering for him; a cycle from which freedom is next to impossible) without serving, worshipping and having devotion for my dear Lord Sri Ram!¹

I bow my head repeatedly, I pay my obeisance again and again, and I prostrate myself over and over again before such a Supreme Lord as Sri Ram!² (7)

The eternal and imperishable Great Lord Ram who has been so enormously and selflessly gracious even upon humble creatures like me who are so sinful, evil and wicked—I once again bow my head and pay my obeisance to such a Lord as Sri Ram who gives shelter to even lowly souls and purifies them³. (8)

[Note—¹To wit, the only way a creature can free himself from the vice-like grip of the notorious cycle of life-and-death-and-rebirth so as to attain final deliverance from its horrors, and to find emancipation and salvation for his self, i.e. his Atma or soul, is to devote himself to Lord Ram. That's the only way out.

²The Holy Bible says—"The Lord is my rock, my fortress, my deliverer, my refuge, my stronghold, my shield, and my saviour—worthy to be praised": 2 Samuel, 22/1-4.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 43; and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precedes Doha no. 44.]

दो०. जासु नाम भव भेषज हरन घोर त्रय सूल ।
सो कृपाल मोहि तो पर सदा रहउ अनुकूल ॥ १२४ (क) ॥
dōhā.

jāsu nāma bhava bhēṣaja harana ghōra traya sūla.
sō krpāla mōhi tō para sadā raha'u anukūla. 124 (a).

[Invoking Lord Ram's blessings before finally concluding his discourse, Kaagbhusund said to Garud—] The Lord (Sri Ram) whose divine, holy and sacred Name is a powerful remedy against the symbolic disease known as the 'the cycle of birth and death' (in which all the creatures find themselves trapped and suffering interminably), and which can eliminate or neutralise the three types of Great Horrors¹ that continuously torment a creature in this world (while he remains trapped in this aforesaid cycle)—I pray that such a magnanimous and benevolent Lord Ram may always remain gracious and kind upon me as well as you (Garud)! (Doha no. 124-a)

[Note—¹The three Great Horrors are “Adhidaivic” –problems related to opposed gods and stars; “Adhivhautic” –problems related to life in this mortal world; and “Adhyatmic” –spiritual problems. These three problems create a lot of misery for all living beings. Kaagbhusund says that the only solution for this malaise is to take shelter in the holy feet of Lord Ram and use the remedy of Lord's Holy Name by repeating it continuously, chanting or uttering it at all times, and thereby invoking the grace of the Lord which would automatically act as an antidote to all the aforesaid problems.]

सुनि भुसुंङि के बचन सुभ देखि राम पद नेह ।
बोलेउ प्रेम सहित गिरा गरुड़ बिगत संदेह ॥ १२४ (ख) ॥

sunī bhusuṇḍi kē bacana subha dēkhi rāma pada nēha.
bōlē'u prēma sahita girā garuṛa bigata sandēha. 124 (b).

Hearing the auspicious words (discourse) of Kaagbhusund, and observing the latter's deep affection, faith and devotion for the holy feet of Lord Ram, Garud felt extremely glad and emotionally fulfilled. All his doubts were dispelled, and he said in most affectionate terms as follows (in the verses herein below) --- (Doha no. 124-b)

चौ०. मैं कृतकृत्य भयउँ तव बानी । सुनि रघुबीर भगति रस सानी ॥ १ ॥
राम चरन नूतन रति भई । माया जनित बिपति सब गई ॥ २ ॥
caupāī.

mairṁ kṛtakṛtya bhaya'um̐ tava bānī. suni raghubīra bhagati rasa sānī. 1.
rāma carana nūtana rati bha'ī. māyā janita bipati saba ga'ī. 2.

Garud said to Kaagbhusund—‘I have attained the objective of coming here, and feel fulfilled and fully contented by hearing your gracious words (discourse) that were soaked in devotion and affection for Lord Ram (Raghupati). (1)

I have developed a new surge of devotion and affection for the holy feet of Lord Ram. All the problems created by ‘Maya’ (delusions and its attendant ignorance) have been now been dispelled; all my consternations and doubts are removed. (2)

मोह जलधि बोहित तुम्ह भए । मो कहँ नाथ बिबिध सुख दए ॥ ३ ॥
मो पहिँ होइ न प्रति उपकारा । बंदउँ तव पद बारहिँ बारा ॥ ४ ॥

mōha jaladhi bōhita tumha bha'e. mō kaham̐ nātha bibidha sukha da'e. 3.
mō pahim̐ hō'i na prati upakārā. banda'um̐ tava pada bārahim̐ bārā. 4.

Oh Lord (nātha)! I was adrift and lost on the vast ocean symbolised by ‘Moha’ (delusions that attached me to doubts and confusions), and was on the verge of sinking in this fathomless ocean. For me, you have become a ship or a buoy, for you have saved me from drowning in a sea of delusions and its attendant confusions and dilemmas. You have bestowed upon me a lot of joy and beatitude in various ways. (3)

Verily indeed, I feel highly obliged and sincerely indebted to you, and I cannot sufficiently compensate you for what you have done for me and my spiritual welfare, except to bow my head again and again before your august feet as a humble gesture of thanksgiving and expression of gratitude. (4)

पूरन काम राम अनुरागी । तुम्ह सम तात न कोउ बड़भागी ॥ ५ ॥
संत बिटप सरिता गिरि धरनी । पर हित हेतु सबन्ह कै करनी ॥ ६ ॥

pūrana kāma rāma anurāgī. tumha sama tāta na kō'u barābhāgī. 5.
santa biṭapa saritā giri dharanī. para hita hētu saban̐ha kai karanī. 6.

You (i.e. sage Kaagbhusund) are fully accomplished and all your spiritual desires have been fulfilled. There is no doubt about it.

Not only this, you have affection for Lord Ram, and the Lord loves you too.

Oh my dear sage (tāta)! Verily, forsooth and without gainsay, who is more fortunate and privileged in this world than you?¹ (5)

Truly indeed, the deeds and actions of saints, trees, rivers, mountains and the earth are always for the good of others². (6)

[Note—¹To wit, no living being, including great sages, is as lucky as sage Kaagbhusund. The reason is that Kaagbhusund has been blessed by Lord Ram himself.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 83—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 88.

²Saints always think of others' good and welfare so much so that they would rather prefer to suffer if it helps others. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 15 that precedes Doha no. 121.

The trees offer shade, flowers, fruits and seeds to serve other creatures. Even their own bodies are offered to others by way of firewood and construction material. The skin of the Birch tree is used to make paper and clothes that were worn by hermits in ancient times. A host of birds and insects find their dwelling place in them.

Rivers are the lifelines of human civilisation. They are homes to a complete ecosystem consisting of aquatic plants and animals. Some of them are regarded as very holy: for instance river Ganges and river Yamuna.

Quite like the rivers, the mountains give shelter to huge trees and forests, which in turn are habitats of wildlife. They cause rainfall, are abodes for hermits and ascetics, and offer cooler climes to those who can't bear the heat of the plains. Some of the most important pilgrim centers in India are located there. All the mighty rivers have their origin in the glaciers of the mountains.

The importance of earth is so tremendous that it need not be enumerated. The earth is called 'Mother Earth' simply because it always serves its off-springs, all the creatures who live on or beneath its surface, providing them with all their needs and being a host to them during their life—in spite of the fact that the same off-spring exploits the earth and never even thanks it.

Like all these entities, your life has been spent in providing spiritual guidance to creatures like me who find themselves lost in the thick maze of delusions.

The excellent qualities of true saints have been outlined by Lord Ram himself in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 37—to Doha no. 38; and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 41.]

संत हृदय नवनीत समाना । कहा कबिन्ह परि कहै न जाना ॥ ७ ॥

निज परिताप द्रवइ नवनीता । पर दुख द्रवहिं संत सुपुनीता ॥ ८ ॥

santa hrdaya navanīta samānā. kahā kabinha pari kahai na jānā. 7.

nija paritāpa drava'i navanītā. para dukha dravahim santa supunītā. 8.

Expert and learned poets have asserted that the heart of a saint is like pure and freshly produced butter (navanīta). But unfortunately these poets overlooked their uniqueness, and did not highlight the real quality and outstanding virtue of such exalted saints. [What is it? It is narrated in the next line.] (7)

The butter melts when it is heated on fire, but the heart of exalted saints is so tender and merciful that it melts at the suffering and torments of others. [To wit, even if a saint is not personally subjected to any trouble but he observes others in trouble, his heart begins to wail as if the trouble was being suffered by the saint himself. Their heart has a lot of empathy and sympathy for others.] (8)

जीवन जन्म सुफल मम भयऊ । तव प्रसाद संसय सब गयऊ ॥ ९ ॥
जानेहु सदा मोहि निज किंकर । पुनि पुनि उमा कहइ बिहंगबर ॥ १० ॥

jīvana janma suphala mama bhaya'ū. tava prasāda sansaya saba gaya'ū. 9.
jānēhu sadā mōhi nija kiṅkara. puni puni umā kaha'i bihaṅgabara. 10.

My life and birth in this world have both been rewarded, and I feel honoured, privileged and fulfilled. By your grace, all my doubts and confusions have been erased for good. (9)

Please be kind to always treat me as your faithful and sincere servant (follower and subordinate—“nija kiṅkara”). [To wit, I am now onwards your disciple, and hence I am ready to serve you whenever you need me. So please never ever hesitate to call me to be at your service.]

[Lord Shiva, who was narrating this conversation between Kaagbhusund and Garud to his consort Uma or Parvati, said to her—] ‘Oh Uma! The most exalted amongst the birds (i.e. Garud) felt so extremely grateful towards Kaagbhusund that he repeatedly said these words of submission and gratitude to him¹. (10)

[Note—¹Garud was so overwhelmed with spiritual joy and bliss that he could not find apt words to thank his preceptor Kaagbhusund sufficiently, so he repeatedly bowed his head before the crow-saint and submitted himself before him, vowing to serve Kaagbhusund for life, in any manner he deemed fit.]

दो०. तासु चरन सिरु नाइ करि प्रेम सहित मतिधीर ।
गयउ गरुड़ बैकुंठ तब हृदयँ राखि रघुबीर ॥ १२५ (क) ॥
dōhā.

tāsu carana siru nā'i kari prēma sahita matidhīra.
gaya'u garuṛa baikuṇṭha taba hṛdayam' rākhi raghubīra. 125 (a).

The enlightened and wisened Garud then bowed his head most reverentially at the feet of Kaagbhusund, enshrined the image of Lord Ram (Raghubir) in his heart, and went away cheerfully to Vaikuntha (his abode in the heaven where he served Lord Vishnu as his dear mount). (Doha no. 125-a)

गिरिजा संत समागम सम न लाभ कछु आन ।
बिनु हरि कृपा न होइ सो गावहिं बेद पुरान ॥ १२५ (ख) ॥

girijā santa samāgama sama na lābha kachu āna.
binu hari kṛpā na hō'i sō gāvahim bēda purāna. 125 (b).

[Lord Shiva told his consort Girija or Parvati—] ‘Oh Girija (one of the many name of Lord Shiva’s consort)! There is indeed no gain or good fortune bigger than having the opportunity of company of true saints and communion with them¹. But wise sages

have said that this luck cannot be availed of without the grace of Lord Ram.' (Doha no. 125-b)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 13 that precedes Doha no. 121 where sage Kaagbhusund has also said this thing to Garud.]

चौ०. कहेउँ परम पुनीत इतिहासा । सुनत श्रवन छूटहिं भव पासा ॥ १ ॥
 प्रनत कल्पतरु करुना पुंजा । उपजइ प्रीति राम पद कंजा ॥ २ ॥
 मन क्रम बचन जनित अघ जाई । सुनहिं जे कथा श्रवन मन लाई ॥ ३ ॥
 caupāī.

kahē'um' parama punīta itihāsā. sunata śravana chūṭahim bhava pāsā. 1.
 pranata kalpataru karunā punjā. upaja'i prīti rāma pada kañjā. 2.
 mana krama bacana janita agha jāī. sunahim jē kathā śravana mana lāī. 3.

[Lord Shiva continued—] 'I have narrated this most holy, divine and sacred story of Lord Ram to you. It is a story by hearing of which a creature is freed from the fetters that shackle him to the formidable cycle of birth and death in this world of transmigration. [To wit, this story of Lord Ram has the magical power to provide spiritual liberation and deliverance to all those who listen to it with due reverence, faith and devotion.] (1)

For all those who submit themselves to Lord Ram and take refuge with him, this wonderful mystical story proves to be an all wish-fulling tree of the gods known as Kalpa Tree for it not only fulfils all their desires but also grants them abiding affection for Lord Ram who is most merciful and compassionate, as well as steady devotion for the Lord's lotus-like holy feet. (2)

Those who listen to this divine story of Lord Ram with full attention, devotion and faith, all the sins arising out of the deeds done by the three components of their bodies—such as the sins which have their origin in the evil thoughts of the mind, any sort of evil words spoken by them, as well as any evil actions taken by them—all such sins and their negative effects are neutralised and eliminated.

[Those who have faith in Lord Ram and listen to the story of the Lord with devotion are absolved of all their sins and their consequences. They are spiritually purified, and they become eligible to attain emancipation and salvation for their soul.] (3)

तीर्थाटन साधन समुदाई । जोग बिराग ग्यान निपुनाई ॥ ४ ॥
 नाना कर्म धर्म ब्रत दाना । संजम दम जप तप मख नाना ॥ ५ ॥
 भूत दया द्विज गुर सेवकाई । बिद्या बिनय बिबेक बड़ाई ॥ ६ ॥

tīrthāṭana sādhanā samudāī. jōga birāga gyāna nipunāī. 4.
 nānā karma dharma brata dānā. sanjama dama japa tapa makha nānā. 5.

bhūta dayā dvija gura sēvakā'ī. bidyā binaya bibēka barā'ī. 6.

{Now in these verses are listed some of the best means prescribed by the scriptures by which a creature can attain spiritual blessedness and eternal bliss, and then goes on to say that the best reward of all these practices is to have abiding and true Bhakti or devotion for Lord Ram. This virtue of 'Bhakti' proves to the legendary Kalpa Tree for the devotee as it fulfils all his desires, both the temporal as well as the spiritual.}

There are indeed many spiritual path (prescribed by the Vedas) that are all meritorious and effective in themselves (sādhana samudā'ī). Some of them are the following: Pilgrimage to holy places (tīrthāṭana), doing Yoga (meditation that leads to the union of the individual's soul with the Supreme Cosmic Soul— jōga), practicing the virtues of renunciation, detachment and dispassion (birāga), becoming an expert in wisdom and knowledge leading to enlightenment and self-realisation (gyāna nipunā'ī) --- (4)

Doing various kinds of meritorious religious deeds, undertaking many kinds of religious observances and vows, practicing numerous religious rites and sacraments (nānā karma), following the righteous path that is auspicious, proper and noble (dharma), keeping vows (brata), making charities and donations (dānā), practicing strict self-control over one's sense organs and diligently observing the principles of self-restraint and abstinence from all sorts of indulgences (sanjama dama), saying of prayers and repeating holy spiritual formulas (japa), doing penance and observing austerity (tapa), doing various fire sacrifices (makha nānā)--- (5)

Being merciful and compassionate towards other living beings (bhūta dayā), doing service to those who are elderly, learned and wise, as well as serving one's teacher and preceptor (dvija gura sēvakā'ī), possessing the virtues of wisdom and true knowledge (and honouring those who possess these qualities) (bidyā), being polite and humble (binaya), having intelligence and prudence (bibēka), and honouring others who have any of these glorious virtues (barā'ī). (6)

जहँ लगि साधन बेद बखानी । सब कर फल हरि भगति भवानी ॥ ७ ॥

सो रघुनाथ भगति श्रुति गाई । राम कृपाँ काहूँ एक पाई ॥ ८ ॥

jaham' lagi sādhanā bēda bakhānī. saba kara phala hari bhagati bhavānī. 7.
sō raghunātha bhagati śruti gā'ī. rāma kṛpām' kāhūm' ēka pā'ī. 8.

Oh Bhavani (which is one of the many names of Lord Shiva's consort)! Whatever kind of spiritual means that the Vedas have prescribed and described, all have one thing in common, and it is this: the best reward that a creature gets by practicing them is to be blessed by having Bhakti (devotion) for Lord Hari (Lord God; Lord Ram) (7)

But this Bhakti for Lord Raghunath (the Lord of the Raghus; one of the many names of Sri Ram) is attainable only rarely by someone upon whom Lord Ram has become benevolent and graceful¹. (8)

[Note—¹The best reward of practicing all the religious and meritorious deeds prescribed by the Vedas is to find spiritual blessedness by way of having devotion for Lord Ram. But this eclectic reward is attainable only if the Lord shows his grace upon the fortunate creature.]

दो०. मुनि दुर्लभ हरि भगति नर पावहिं बिनहिं प्रयास ।
जे यह कथा निरंतर सुनहिं मानि बिस्वास ॥ १२६ ॥
dōhā.

muni durlabha hari bhagati nara pāvahiṁ binahiṁ prayāsa.
jē yaha kathā nirantara sunahiṁ māni bisvāsa. 126.

That eclectic spiritual reward known as 'Bhakti' which is difficult even for great sages and seers to obtain (inspite of making so many efforts as enumerated in the aforesaid verses), is however easily and readily available, without the least difficulty, to those persons who regularly hear this sacred story of Lord Ram with faith and devotion. (Doha no. 126)

चौ०. सोइ सर्बग्य गुनी सोइ ग्याता । सोइ महि मंडित पंडित दाता ॥ १ ॥
धर्म परायन सोइ कुल त्राता । राम चरन जा कर मन राता ॥ २ ॥
caupāī.

sō'i sarbagya gunī sō'i gyātā. sō'i mahi maṇḍita paṇḍita dātā. 1.
dharma parāyana sō'i kula trātā. rāma carana jā kara mana rātā. 2.

A person who has devotion for Lord Ram's holy feet, if he worships the Lord's holy feet and has reverence for them (rāma carana jā kara mana rātā) then he is deemed to be all-knowing and omniscient (sō'i sarbagya), is said to possess excellent virtues and character (gunī), is regarded as most wise, realised and an expert in all spiritual knowledge and skills (sō'i gyātā), is like an ornament of the world (mahi maṇḍita) as he is the most exalted and an enlightened being (paṇḍita), is very munificent and generous as he is a bestower of knowledge and can grant blessings upon others (dātā), is a follower of the auspicious path of righteousness, probity, propriety, and noble conduct and thought (dharma parāyana), and is regarded as a saviour of his entire clan and race (sō'i kula trātā). (1-2)

नीति निपुन सोइ परम सयाना । श्रुति सिद्धांत नीक तेहिं जाना ॥ ३ ॥
सोइ कवि कोबिद सोइ रनधीरा । जो छल छाड़ि भजइ रघुबीरा ॥ ४ ॥

nīti nipuna sō'i parama sayānā. śruti sid'dhānta nīka tēhiṁ jānā. 3.
sō'i kabi kōbida sō'i ranadhīrā. jō chala chāḍi bhaja'i raghubīrā. 4.

A person who worships Lord Ram sincerely, without pretensions or deceit, and with a pure inner-self (jō chala chāḍi bhaja'i raghubīrā) is regarded as being an expert in spiritual principles as well as the most wise and enlightened soul in this field (nīti nipuna sō'i parama sayānā).

Verily indeed, such a person is deemed to be well-versed in the essence of the Vedas as he understands correctly and fully the meaning and objective of their teaching (śruti sid'dhānta nīka tēhim jānā).

Forsooth, such a person is perfect in learning and knowledge, and hence a perfect seer; he is most sagacious and erudite (sō'i kabi kōbida).

And he is so steadfast in his belief and faith that he is not affected by his detractors, or deflected from his path by delusions and confusions (sō'i ranadhīrā). (3-4)

धन्य देस सो जहँ सुरसरी । धन्य नारि पतिव्रत अनुसरी ॥ ५ ॥

धन्य सो भूपु नीति जो करई । धन्य सो द्विज निज धर्म न टरई ॥ ६ ॥

dhan'ya dēsa sō jaham' surasārī. dhan'ya nāri patibrata anusārī. 5.

dhan'ya sō bhūpu nīti jō kara'ī. dhan'ya sō dvija nija dharma na ṭara'ī. 6.

That land is blessed and fortunate where the holy river Ganges flows.

That wife is blessed and fortunate who is loyal to her husband and observes the vows of fidelity. (5)

That king is blessed and fortunate who follows the principles of law and probity, and rules his kingdom accordingly.

That Brahmin (dvija) is blessed and fortunate who does not falter in his duties and swerves away from his righteous path no matter what happens or what the provocation is. (6)

सो धन धन्य प्रथम गति जाकी । धन्य पुन्य रत मति सोइ पाकी ॥ ७ ॥

धन्य घरी सोइ जब सतसंगा । धन्य जन्म द्विज भगति अभंगा ॥ ८ ॥

sō dhana dhan'ya prathama gati jākī. dhan'ya pun'ya rata mati sō'i pākī. 7.

dhan'ya gharī sō'i jaba satasaṅgā. dhan'ya janma dvija bhagati abhaṅgā. 8.

That wealth is blessed and well acquired which is destined for some auspicious purpose (such as in making charity or helping others who are in distress)¹.

That intellect is deemed to be refined and ripe which is pure and free from taints, and is involved in doing meritorious things. (7)

That moment is blessed and fortunate when has the company of true saints and is able to interact with them.

And that birth is blessed and fortunate in which a person practices constant service of Brahmins (i.e. those who are learned and wise in the society)². (8)

[Note—¹Wealth has the following destinations— it is used to benefit others and help them in their need; it is hoarded and is of no use to anyone, and in due course of time it decays; it is squandered away in luxury and pleasure; it is used, directly or indirectly, to harm the interest of others.

However, the best use of wealth is that it is shared with others and is used to alleviate the suffering of those in distress. The worst use of wealth is to hoard it and let it decay. The medium level of use of the wealth has varying degrees of goodness or futility according to the use to which it is put. For instance, if it is employed for meeting basic needs of life, it is comparatively a good use of wealth, but if it is used for luxury and sensual pleasures it is not only wasted away in futile pursuits but creates a negative and degrading impact on the future of the owner.

²The word “Brahmin” has its root in ‘Brahm’, the Supreme Being. A true Brahmin is a representative of Brahm in the sense that he is spiritually empowered, highly wise, enlightened, self-realised, erudite, sagacious, contented and fulfilled. Such a Brahmin is deemed to be a personified form of Brahm, and service to this Brahmin is synonymous with service to Brahm.

In this sense this statement means that a person is deemed to be blessed and fortunate if he serves a Brahmin with the insight that while doing so he is actually serving Brahm, the Supreme Being.

Hence, through the form of a human being called a “Brahmin”, a wise person is actually worshipping Lord God, the supreme Brahm.]

दो०. सो कुल धन्य उमा सुनु जगत पूज्य सुपुनीत ।

श्रीरघुबीर परायन जेहिं नर उपज बिनीत ॥ १२७ ॥

dōhā.

sō kula dhan'ya umā sunu jagata pūjya supunīta.
śrīraghubīra parāyana jēhiṁ nara upaja binīta. 127.

[Lord Shiva told his consort—] Listen Uma! In this world, that family or clan or race is deemed to be blessed and fortunate, exalted and pure, and worthy of respect, honour and glory, in which are born people who are pious, humble and sincerely devoted to Lord Raghupati (Sri Ram). (Doha no. 127)

चौ०. मति अनुरूप कथा मैं भाषी । जद्यपि प्रथम गुप्त करि राखी ॥ १ ॥

तव मन प्रीति देखि अधिकाई । तब मैं रघुपति कथा सुनाई ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

mati anurūpa kathā mair̥ bhāṣī. jadyapi prathama gupta kari rākhī. 1.
tava mana prīti dēkhi adhikāī. taba mair̥ raghupati kathā sunāī. 2.

I have narrated this divine, holy and sacred story (of Lord Ram) according to the best abilities of my intellect, though I had previously kept it secret (after conceiving it in my heart). (1)

When I observed a lot of affection in your heart and found that you are sincerely eager to hear it, I decided to tell (or share, divulge this secret) to you¹. (2)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 30; and (ii) Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 35.]

यह न कहिअ सठही हठसीलहि । जो मन लाइ न सुन हरि लीलहि ॥ ३ ॥
कहिअ न लोभिहि क्रोधिहि कामिहि । जो न भजइ सचराचर स्वामिहि ॥ ४ ॥

yaha na kahi'a saṭhahī haṭhasīlahi. jō mana lā'i na suna hari līlahi. 3.
kahi'a na lōbhihi krōdhihi kāmīhi. jō na bhaja'i sacarācara svāmihi. 4.

{Now, the following verses list some category of people who should not be told this glorious story of Lord Ram.}

This story should not be narrated before those who are wicked and pervert in their heart and mind. It should not be told to those who are stubborn sceptics who are unable to overcome their preconceived distorted notions about the Lord and spiritual values. Nor should it be recounted to those people who do not listen to the glorious deeds of Lord Hari with attention, faith and interest¹. (3)

Similarly, it should not be told to those who are greedy (for worldly gains), are inclined to be angry (because they would never agree with things that don't suit their pervert minds), and are lustful (for worldly pleasures)².

It should also not be narrated to those who do not worship, don't have faith in and don't adore the almighty Lord of the entire universe (for such people are non-believers and heretics who would find pleasure in demeaning and ridiculing the holy story to the best of their abilities)³. (4)

[Note—¹Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, (i) Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 38—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 39; and (ii) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 13 that precedes Doha no. 113.

The basic idea in these verses is that those who are wicked and pervert would first won't understand the story and its spiritual message, then find numerous faults with it, and after that if someone comes to them for advice they would discourage him from listening to it by vociferously criticising the story.

In this situation, it is like poisoning the lake of nectar by allowing ineligible people to take a bath in it. Such people do more harm than any worthwhile good.

The reason is that these sceptics would ridicule the divine story, they would mock and deride it, find fault with it, and would kill the very purpose for which it is being narrated in the first place—i.e. to help a creature find spiritual bliss and happiness, to help him overcome the numerous torments and miseries from which his heart and mind are suffering in this world, and to help him attain liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death by awakening his dormant spiritual qualities that would make him self-realised and enlightened about his 'true self', which is pure consciousness, and its oneness with the supreme Self or the cosmic Consciousness represented by Lord Ram.

²Those who are “greedy” would exploit this spiritual story to make pecuniary gains and self-enrichment, instead of explaining the subtle spiritual message that it contains, thereby killing its main objective.

Those who have the habit of getting “angry” would argue with the narrator and teacher who is narrating and explaining the story to them if they don’t agree with some point, or put forward absurd propositions and arguments to contradict the story, leading to exchange of heated words and generally vitiating the atmosphere, creating ill-will and malice all around.

Again, those who are “lustful” will find it hard to stomach the spiritual message of renunciation, dispassion and detachment from the world and its sensual pleasures, and so would vehemently oppose the story.

³Heretics and non-believers will mock at the story and say it is a cock-and-bull imagination of the mind. They would find tonnes of contradictions in the narrative, and say for instance “well, how can the Supreme Being become a man?” There is no wonder they would do so, for even Garud, who is so close to Lord Vishnu as he is the Lord’s personal attendant and mount, too had been confused about the reality of Lord Ram. This is the reason why he had gone to Kaagbhusund to hear the story of Lord Ram.

But Garud was not a non-believer; he was simply confused. He wanted clarifications; he was receptive and willing to learn. And that is why he could grasp the hidden meaning of the story when explained by Kaagbhusund.

Heretics, sceptics and non-believers, those who are extremely orthodox and of a fanatical mind, those who are too stubborn to listen to anybody else or any thing that contradicts their preconceived and dogmatic ideas of what constitutes true religion, should not be told this story of Lord Ram. Like the Pharisees who derided Jesus Christ especially according to the Gospel of St. John, those who have no devotion and affection for Lord Ram would denigrate the story of the Lord, prick holes in it, deride, mock and insinuate it no end. Hence, it is best to avoid telling this mystical story to them.]

द्विज द्रोहिहि न सुनाइअ कबहूँ । सुरपति सरिस होइ नृप जबहूँ ॥ ५ ॥
राम कथा के तेइ अधिकारी । जिन्ह कें सतसंगति अति प्यारी ॥ ६ ॥

dvija drōhihi na sunā'i'a kabahūṁ. surapati sarisa hō'i nṛpa jabahūṁ. 5.
rāma kathā kē tē'i adhikārī. jinha kēm satasaṅgati ati pyārī. 6.

This story should not to narrated before those who are opposed to Brahmins and harbour hatred for them (dvija drōhihi) even if such people are very highly placed like being a king of the realm, and even among the kings may be occupying an exalted stature equivalent to the king of gods known as Indra (surapati)¹. (5)

[Now are listed those persons who are eligible to hear the story of Lord Ram.]

Those who love to have communion with saints and keep their company are the ones who are eligible to hear the (divine, holy and sacred) story of Lord Ram². (6)

[Note—¹To wit, one should not be afraid to refuse to tell this story to an ineligible person out of fear of punishment just because the latter is as powerful and strong like a king.]

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 4-7 that precedes Doha no. 2; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 6-9 that precedes Doha no. 3; (iii) Chaupai line no. 12 that precedes Doha no. 37; (iv) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 39; (b) Uttar Kand, (iv) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 37—to Doha no. 38; (v) Chaupai line no. 8 that precede Doha no. 39; and (vi) Chaupai line nos. 4-6 that precede Doha no. 61.]

गुर पद प्रीति नीति रत जेई । द्विज सेवक अधिकारी तेई ॥ ७ ॥
ता कहँ यह बिसेष सुखदाई । जाहि प्रानप्रिय श्रीरघुराई ॥ ८ ॥

gura pada prīti nīti rata jē'ī. dvija sēvaka adhikārī tē'ī. 7.
tā kaham̐ yaha bisēṣa sukhadā'ī. jāhi prānapriya śrīraghurā'ī. 8.

Again, those who have reverence for the feet of their Guru (moral preceptor and teacher)¹, those who strictly follow principles of righteous conduct and propriety², those who serve Brahmins³ are the ones who are eligible to hear this story (of Lord Ram). (7)

Further, for those who love and have affection for Lord Raghubir (Sri Ram) like they have for their own selves are the ones who find exceptional charm, delight, happiness, bliss and contentedness in hearing this story of Lord⁴. (8)

[Note—¹Regarding Guru: refer to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 1—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 2.

²Regarding those who follow rules of law and good conduct: refer to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 20—to Doha no. 23.

³Regarding Brahmin: refer to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 2.

⁴Refer to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no.6 that precedes Doha no. 9 which is very specific in reiterating this fact.

Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 126.]

दो०. राम चरन रति जो चह अथवा पद निर्बान ।

भाव सहित सो यह कथा करउ श्रवन पुट पान ॥ १२८ ॥

dōhā.

rāma carana rati jō caha athavā pada nirbāna.
bhāva sahita sō yaha kathā kara'u śravana puṭa pāna. 128.

He who wishes to have steady and true devotion and affection for the holy feet of Lord Ram (representing the Supreme Being and the almighty Lord God), or he who wishes to attain liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation for his soul and find oneness with the Supreme Being, should reverentially hear this (nectar like) divine story of the Lord by symbolically converting his ears into a cup (with which this nectar is drunk by him)¹. (Doha no. 128)

[Note—¹Here, the ‘ears’ are likened to a cup with which one drinks something. The divine story of Lord Ram is like the nectar of bliss and beatitude for the soul, a drink that provides eternity to the soul and liberates it from all its miseries and torments. Just like one needs a cup to drink a liquid, or better still to sip a sweet nectar-like delicious drink, a person who wants eternal peace and bliss for himself should hear the story of Lord Ram attentively and with due devotion.

In this context, refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 10-11 that precede Doha no. 15.

In Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 113 it is said that the ears of those who do not listen to the glorious story of Lord Ram are like the dark foreboding holes where poisonous snakes live.

It is said in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-7 that precede Doha no. 113 that body of a person is good for nothing if he does not listen to the Lord Ram’s glories with his ears, if he does not use his eyes to see great saints who have realised the Lord, if he does not worship him and bows his head reverentially before the Lord, if he does not sing the glories of Lord Ram with his tongue, and if he does not feel exhilarated in his heart by having devotion for the Lord.

In brief, if a living being is devoid of devotion and affection for the Lord, then his entire being is wasted away in futile worldly pursuits, landing his soul in the vicious grip of the cycle of birth and death with its attendant chain of endless miseries, grief, pain, horrors and torments.]

चौ०. राम कथा गिरिजा मैं बरनी । कलि मल समनि मनोमल हरनी ॥ १ ॥

संसृति रोग सजीवन मूरी । राम कथा गावहिं श्रुति सूरी ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

rāma kathā girijā maiṁ baranī. kali mala samani manōmala haranī. 1.
sansṛti rōga sajjivana mūrī. rāma kathā gāvahim śruti sūrī. 2.

[Concluding his discourse to goddess ‘Girija’, which is one of the many names of the consort of Lord Shiva, he said to her—] Oh Girija (girijā)! I have narrated to you the story of Lord Ram, which is at once divine, holy and sacred as well as magnificent, fascinating and sweet to hear, which is mystically empowered to dispel all the sins and their horrible consequences that are integral to life in the era of Kaliyug, and which is able to cleanse the creature’s inner-self of all spiritual taints and blemishes in order to make it pure and holy. (1)

Verily indeed, in all sooth and without gainsay, wise ones and the scriptures such as the Vedas assert unequivocally and unanimously that this glorious story of Lord Ram is like the mystical medicinal herb known as ‘Sanjivani’ that can liberate the creature from the torments of the horrifying disease symbolised by the cycle of birth and death. [Nay, it can actually cure the disease itself!] (2)

एहि महँ रुचिर सप्त सोपाना । रघुपति भगति केर पंथाना ॥ ३ ॥
अति हरि कृपा जाहि पर होई । पाउँ देइ एहिं मारग सोई ॥ ४ ॥

ēhi maham̐ rucira sapta sōpānā. raghupati bhagati kēra panthānā. 3.
ati hari kṛpā jāhi para hōī. pā'um̐ dē'i ēhim mārāga sōī. 4.

This wonderfully magnificent story has seven Cantos or Chapters (known as the “Kands or Kāṇḍs”)¹. These are like the seven symbolic steps or milestones in the spiritual path that finally lead to attainment of devotion for Lord Raghupati (Sri Ram). (3)

Only he upon whom Lord Hari (Lord Ram) is extremely munificent and gracious is able to step on this path². (4)

[Note—¹The ‘Seven Chapters’ are the following: Baal Kand, Ayodhya Kand, Aranya Kand, Kishkindha Kand, Sundar Kand, Lanka Kand, and Uttar Kand.

A similar idea is expressed in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 37.

²Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 38 along with Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes it where an exactly similar idea is expressed.]

मन कामना सिद्धि नर पावा । जे यह कथा कपट तजि गावा ॥ ५ ॥
कहहिं सुनहिं अनुमोदन करहीं । ते गोपद इव भवनिधि तरहीं ॥ ६ ॥

mana kāmanā sid'dhi nara pāvā. jē yaha kathā kapaṭa taji gāvā. 5.
kahahim̐ sunahim̐ anumōdana karahim̐. tē gōpada iva bhavanidhi tarahim̐. 6.

A person who sings or narrates this story with sincerity and without deception in his heart¹ is able to fulfil all his wishes (both spiritual as well as temporal). (5)

A person who hears, narrates and praises (or endorses) this story of the Lord is able to cross this vast and fathomless ocean symbolised by the endless cycle of birth and death (or the world of transmigration) as easily as crossing a small and shallow groove made on the surface of earth by the hoof of a cow². (4)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 38; (b) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 52.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Doha no. 126; (ii) Doha no. 128 along with Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes it; and (iii) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 129.

This analogy of the ‘groove made on earth by the cow’s hoof’ is to imply that one can cross this endless ocean-like world of transmigration to attain emancipation and salvation for his soul by hearing, narrating and praising the Lord’s story as easily and effortlessly as one crosses a very small puddle of water that one finds in his path leading to his destination. This puddle is made due to the hollow carved out on the earth by the hoof of the cow, but it is so small and shallow that it does not even merit any attention as one walks steadily towards his destination.]

सुनि सब कथा हृदय अति भाई । गिरिजा बोली गिरा सुहाई ॥ ७ ॥
नाथ कृपाँ मम गत संदेहा । राम चरन उपजेउ नव नेहा ॥ ८ ॥

sunī saba kathā hr̥daya ati bhāī. girijā bōlī girā suhāī. 7.
nātha kr̥pām̐ mama gata sandēhā. rāma carana upajē'u nava nēhā. 8.

{Now we go back to the time when the great sage Yagyavalkya had started narrating the story of Lord Ram, known as the “Ram Charit Manas”, to sage Bharadwaj when the latter expressed his desire to hear it. Yagyavalkya had used the conversation between Lord Shiva and goddess Parvati to narrate the story of Lord Ram to Bharadwaj. This background of the revelation of this story of Lord Ram is clearly mentioned in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line nos. 4 that precedes Doha no. 45—to Doha no. 47; and then from Chaupai line nos. 4 that precedes Doha no. 106—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 113.

This narration is completed here when sage Yagyavalkya told sage Bharadwaj that goddess Parvati felt extremely exhilarated, emotionally fulfilled, and spiritually blessed when Lord Shiva concluded telling the story of Lord Ram to her. Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 130 herein below.}

[Sage Yagyavalkya told sage Bharadwaj—] ‘This whole story of Lord Ram was extremely loved by goddess Girija (also known as Parvati or Uma; the consort of Lord Shiva) in her heart. [To wit, goddess Girija’s heart felt euphoric when she had heard the full story of Lord Ram narrated to her by her husband, Lord Shiva.]

She delightfully said to Lord Shiva in a sweet tone [7], “Oh Lord (nātha)! By your grace and munificence, I have overcome my delusions and doubts¹, and I have been able to establish renewed devotion, faith and affection for the holy feet of Lord Ram² [8]. (7-8)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 50—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 55; and (ii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 108—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 111.

In these verses we read how and why Parvati had developed doubts about the real identity of Lord Ram as a manifested form of the Supreme Being himself. When she had heard the entire story and explanations from her husband Lord Shiva, all her misgivings were removed. There was renewed devotion and affection for Lord Ram in her heart, and all confusions in her mind were dispelled.]

दो०. मैं कृतकृत्य भइउँ अब तव प्रसाद बिस्वेस ।
 उपजी राम भगति दृढ़ बीते सकल कलेस ॥ १२९ ॥
 dōhā.

maiṁ kṛtakṛtya bhaṭ'um̐ aba tava prasāda bisvēsa.
 upajī rāma bhagati dṛṛha bītē sakala kalēsa. 129.

[Goddess expressed her sincere thanks and gratitude to Lord Shiva by saying—] Oh Lord of the Universe (“bisvēsa”—i.e. Lord Shiva)! By your grace and benevolence, I am now feeling spiritually accomplished, fulfilled and contented.

I have been able to establish firm devotion and affection for Lord Ram (in my heart and mind; in my inner-self), and (as a reward of this) all my (spiritual) torments and afflictions have vanished for good.” (Doha no. 129)

चौ०. यह सुभ संभु उमा संबादा । सुख संपादन समन बिषादा ॥ १ ॥
 भव भंजन गंजन संदेहा । जन रंजन सज्जन प्रिय एहा ॥ २ ॥
 caupāī.

yaha subha sambhu umā sambādā. Sukha sampādana samana biṣādā. 1.
 bhava bhañjana gañjana sandēhā. Jana rañjana sajjana priya ēhā. 2.

[Sage Yagyavalkya made these observations to sum-up his narration of the story of Lord Ram. Here he briefly outlines the rewards of hearing this divine, sacred and holy story of the Lord.

Yagyavalkya told sage Bharadwaj—] ‘This spiritually enlightening conversation between Lord Shiva (Sambhu) and goddess Uma (his consort) is a bestower of great joy, happiness, bliss and beatitude, and at the same time it is able to destroy all sorts of sorrows and torments that haunt a creature. (1)

It is a destroyer of the bondage formed by the cycle of life and death.

It is a remover of all spiritual delusions, ignorance, doubts, confusions and consternations.

It grants joy, happiness and exhilaration to devotees, and it is exceedingly liked by saints and pious souls.¹ (2)

[Note—¹As we have already seen in the previous verses, these facts have been reiterated again and again. For instance, refer to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 126 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it.]

राम उपासक जे जग माहीं । एहि सम प्रिय तिन्ह कें कछु नाही ॥ ३ ॥
 रघुपति कृपाँ जथामति गावा । मैं यह पावन चरित सुहावा ॥ ४ ॥

rāma upāsaka jē jaga māhīm. ēhi sama priya tinha kēm kachu nāhīm. 3.
raghupati kṛpām^१ jathāmati gāvā. mairi yaha pāvana carita suhāvā. 4.

For those who are devotees of Lord Ram, those who worship, adore and revere the Lord, there is nothing more dear to them than this story of the Lord¹. (3)

By the grace and munificence of Lord Raghupati (Lord Ram), I (sage Yagyavalkya) have narrated this pleasant, wonderful, purifying, divine, holy, sacred and glorious story of Lord Ram that describes the Lord's mystical life and deeds during his sojourn in this world in a human form (pāvana carita suhāvā) according to my abilities and to the best of my knowledge and understanding (jathāmati)². (4)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 128.

²No one can claim to be absolute, perfect and comprehensive in his narration of Lord Ram's story. Every narrator tells the story according to his grasp and understanding—because this story is as vast and endless as the cosmos itself.

This fact that one describes the story of Lord Ram according to his own abilities and subject to his limitations is reiterated by the saintly crow Kaagbhusund when he had completed his own narration for Garud. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 123-a.

What more to say—even the omniscient, all-knowing, self-realised and enlightened God known as Lord Shiva, who was the first to have become aware of this story when he was meditating upon Lord Ram, had expressed the same limitation at the time of concluding narrating the story to goddess Parvati. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 128.

The great and blessed soul Goswami Tulsidas, the poet who was chosen by the Lord God to reveal this esoteric story of all of us during our present age, had also expressed his limitations while beginning to write this divine story of Lord Ram. This fact is clearly stated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 43-a.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 8—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 14; Doha no. 29-c; Doha no. 30-b.]

एहिं कलिकाल न साधन दूजा । जोग जग्य जप तप ब्रत पूजा ॥ ५ ॥
रामहि सुमिरिअ गाइअ रामहि । संतत सुनिअ राम गुन ग्रामहि ॥ ६ ॥

ēhim kalikāla na sādhana dūjā. jōga jagya japa tapa brata pūjā. 5.
rāmahi sumiri'a gā'i'a rāmahi. santata suni'a rāma guna grāmahi. 6.

{Thus far was the narration of sage Yagyavalkya. Now in these verses the poet-saint Goswami Tulsidas, who had quoted sage Yagyavalkya while writing the present version of the Lord's story known as Ram Charit Manas in the current age in which we live, concludes his own narration. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 43—to Doha no. 47.}

[Tulsidas says—] ‘In the present era known as Kaliyug, one does not have access to any other methods or tools such as Yoga (meditation), Yagya (doing fire and other sacrifices), Japa (repeating of mantras and prayers), Tapa (penance and austerity), Vrata (keeping religious vows) and Puja (worship) for attaining one’s spiritual goals in life. (5)

The only way available to a creature is to always remember Lord Ram, speak about the Lord and praise his glories, and hear the excellent glories of the Lord from true saints. (6)¹

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 103-a along with Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede it.]

जासु पतित पावन बड़ बाना । गावहिं कबि श्रुति संत पुराना ॥ ७ ॥
ताहि भजहि मन तजि कुटिलाई । राम भजें गति केहिं नहिं पाई ॥ ८ ॥

jāsu patita pāvana baṛa bānā. gāvahiṁ kabi śruti santa purānā. 7.
tāhi bhajahi mana taji kuṭilāī. rāma bhajēm gati kēhiṁ nahim pāī. 8.

Great and exalted souls who are wise, sagacious and erudite affirm in an unequivocal and unanimous term that one must abandon all sorts of pretension and falsehood to sincerely worship, revere and have devotion for Lord Ram whose sacrosanct vow and solemn promise is to purify and liberate all those who are fallen and impure (without discrimination or bias)¹. (7)

Verily indeed, in all sooth and without the least gainsay, say who has not found the ultimate liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation if he has worshipped Lord Ram, if he has had devotion for the Lord and has revered and adored him²! (8)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Aranya Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 10; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede Doha no. 43; (c) Sundar Kand, (iii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precede Doha no. 14; (iv) Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 44; (c) Uttar Kand, (v) Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 16.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 124; (ii) Doha no. 128; (iii) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 129.]

छं०. पाई न केहिं गति पतित पावन राम भजि सुनु सठ मना । १ ।
गनिका अजामिल ब्याध गीध गजादि खल तारे घना ॥ २ ॥
आभीर जमन किरात खस स्वपचादि अति अघरूप जे । ३ ।
कहि नाम बारक तेपि पावन होहिं राम नमामि ते ॥ ४ ॥

chanda.

pā'ī na kēhiṁ gati patita pāvana rāma bhaji sunu saṭha manā. 1.
 ganikā ajāmila byādha gīdha gajādi khala tārē ghanā. 2.
 ābhīra jamana kirāta khasa svapacādi ati agharūpa jē. 3.
 kahi nāma bāraka tēpi pāvana hōhiṁ rāma namāmi tē. 4.

Oh my stupid Mana (mind-intellect and heart)! Think deeply (and decide for yourself: who has not found the ultimate destination of the soul (which is liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation; attaining oneness of the individual's soul with the universal Cosmic Soul that ends the cycle of birth and death for a creature) by worshipping and having devotion for Lord Ram who is a purifier of the sinful and impure ones? (Chanda line no. 1)

There are indeed many instances of this: say for example are the cases of Ganika (the prostitute), Ajamil (the sinful Brahmin), Vyada (the hunter who later became the famous sage Valmiki), Giddha (the vulture named Jatau), Gaja (the king of the elephants)¹ and other such sinful and fallen souls who were all provided succour and freedom from their torments by the graceful and munificent Lord Ram. (Chanda line no. 2)

Even the Abhirs (the hilly tribes that lived on the coast of the ocean and used to harass sea-farers who voyaged across the ocean on ships in ancient times), the Yavans (the cruel people who ate flesh and were uncultured and uncivilised), the Kirats (the forest dwelling tribes such as hunters, and they included the Nishads who were boatmen), the Khasas (another hill tribe who, unlike the the Abhirs, lived far away from the ocean), the Swapachs (also called the Chandals, who were out-castes and usually lived near cremation grounds)²—all of whom are deemed to be images of sinfulness, evil and perversion --- (Chanda line no. 3)

--- They too find succour and deliverance, they too become purified of their sins and evil ways by merely uttering the holy name of Lord Ram once. I bow my head most reverentially before such a Lord as Sri Ram! (Chanda line no. 4)

[Note—¹⁻² Refer to: Ram Charit Manas,

(i) Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 26 (regarding Ajamil, Gaja and Ganika);

(ii) Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 19, and Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 194 (regarding Valmiki);

(iii) Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 194 (regarding the Swapacha, Khasas, Yamans, Kola and Kirats;

(iv) Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 135—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 137, and Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 250—to Chanda line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 251 (regarding the Kols, the Kirats, the Bhils etc. who were forest dwelling tribes);

(v) Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 60 (regarding the Abhirs).

Now, we shall read briefly about the individuals used as examples here.

(a) The “Ganika”: There was a prostitute by the name of Pingla. One day she had decorated herself with flowers and ornaments and waited eagerly for her lover. When

he did not turn up even till midnight, she was very contrite and it dawned upon her that if she had spent so much of her time in devotion and remembrance of the Lord, she would have found deliverance. Right onwards, she turned away from her profession and became an ardent devotee of the Lord. This led to her emancipation and salvation.

(b) “Ajamil” (pronounced as “Ajaamil”): He is also known as ‘Dwij Bandhu’ because he was a Brahmin by birth. But unfortunately he became enamoured with a prostitute and married her. Bad company made him turn into a hunter. One day a group of sages passed by the village. When they asked the villagers if there was a Brahmin’s house where they could spend the night, the villagers told them of Ajaamil. So these sages decided to spend the night there. When Ajaamil returned from his hunting trip with a catch of a bird and saw the sages, he felt very ashamed. He confided with them that he is a fallen man and that they should not eat in his house. The saints had a merciful heart and they thought amongst themselves that it is their moral obligation to show this man some way by which he can find liberation and deliverance.

They cooked their own meals with whatever they had. The next day, they summoned Ajaamil and told him, ‘Look, your wife is pregnant. She will soon deliver a son. Give that son the name ‘Narayan’ (one of the many names of Lord Vishnu). This would lead to your emancipation.’ And then the group of sages went on their journey.

When the son was born, Ajaamil named him as advised by them—he called the son ‘Narayan’. He was very fond of the son, and called out his name ‘Narayan, Narayan’ umpteen numbers of times during the course of the day. He was unwittingly taking the name of Lord Vishnu. This continued till the time came for his death. When he was tormented by the messengers of Yam, the God of hell and death, he became terrified and called out in fear—‘Narayan, Narayan. Save me’. Though he was calling his son, but the Lord heard his name being called out by someone in distress. So he sent his own messengers to protect the caller. The messengers of Lord chased away the messengers of Yam and took Ajaamil to heaven. When Yam complained to Vishnu, the Lord told him that if anyone calls out his name at the time of death he is duty-bound to liberate and protect him. This story tells us the power of the name of the Lord.

This story is narrated in Srimad Bhagwat, 6/1-2.

(c) The “Vyadha”: This hunter is different from Valmiki. At the conclusion of his stay on this earth and complete elimination of the Yadu clan (due to mutual fighting), Sri Krishna was sitting under a tree with one leg crossed over the other such that his soles were vertical. A hunter thought it was the face of a deer, and shot at it with an arrow. Coming near, he realised his error and lamented. Sri Krishna told him not to repent because that was his own wish. It is said that Bali (the monkey) was this hunter, and he had avenged Sri Ram's shooting him from a hiding during the fight between Sugriv and Bali. This incident has a moral lesson that our deeds and actions dog us even in our next birth. Sri Ram was no exception. Refer: Tulsidas’ Vinai Patrika, verse no. 214, stanza no. 5.

The great sage Valmiki, who had written the epic book ‘Ramayana’ in Sanskrit language, is also known as ‘Vyadha’ because before he became a renowned sage he was a cruel hunter and robber, often times killing his victims if they failed to give him all they possessed. He is also credited with penning Advhut Ramayan in

which Sita had assumed the form of Maha Kali to kill the Ravana with a thousand heads.

His story in brief is as follows: Valmiki is said to be the son of sage Pracheta who is said to be the son of Varun, the Water God. He is also said to be one of the Prajaapatis—the ancient patriarchs of this world.

According to Adhyatma Ramayan, Ayodhya Kand, Canto 6, verse nos. 57-58 he was a Brahmin by birth but became a cruel robber who would even kill his victims if they failed to give all their possessions to him. He had adopted this means of livelihood because he was brought up by a band of robbers and highway vagabonds who would way lay travelers and rob them. Once the seven celestial sages known as the Sapta-Rishis went through the forest where he lived, and Valmiki accosted them. When asked by the sages why he robbed others, Valmiki replied that he did it to feed his family and other dependants. The sages advised him that they would not share the consequences of sins that he is committing for them. To test the correctness of this advice, Valmiki tied them to a tree and went to his house to ask his kith and kin if they would share any misfortune that might befall upon him. When they replied that they are only concerned with what loot he brings home, Valmiki's eyes of wisdom opened instantaneously. He rushed back to the sages, untied them and fell at their feet seeking forgiveness. He asked them to show him the path by which he can seek redemption and salvation for himself. The sages then advised him to do Japa (repetition) with Lord Ram's holy Name 'RAAM'. Valmiki said that he was so sinful that it is not possible for him to utter the Lord's holy Name. At this, the sages thought over the matter and told him to repeat the name in the reverse order—as 'MARAA'. When this word MARAA is repeated it becomes RAAM. This trick worked fine for Valmiki, and he immediately sat down to do Tapa (severe form of penance) and meditated on the name of the Lord in the reverse order. He became so immobile and lost in contemplation that a mound of anthill formed around his body. It so happened that when the sages returned to the same place during their return journey, they saw him in this condition. They poured consecrated water on him and revived him. It was then that they gave him a new name 'Valmiki', which means 'one who has emerged from an anthill'. This story is narrated in Adhyatma Ramayan, Ayodhya Kand, 6/57-58.

He established a hermitage on the banks of river Tamsa and lived there. Lord Ram went to meet him during his outward journey to the forest, and it was in the sage's hermitage that Sita lived and her two sons Lav and Kush were born when she was sent to exile by Ram during the final days of the Lord's days on earth as a prelude to his winding up his worldly 'Leela' or deeds and ascending to the heaven as Lord Vishnu.

One day Valmiki saw a hunter shoot down a male bird and heard the wailings of his companion, the female bird. He cursed the hunter in a verse that came out of his mouth in a poetic style called the Anushtup Chand (metre). Never before had Valmiki ever composed any verse, so he was astonished at this development. Then Brahma the creator appeared before him and ordered him to compose the epic Ramayan for which the basic story was provided to him by sage Narad.

The genesis of the story of Ramayan is this—Once the celestial sage Narad came to his hermitage (called an Ashram) on the behest of Brahma. Valmiki asked him if there was anyone living in this creation who embodied all the 16 Kalaas (qualities) that the Supreme Being is known to possess. Then Narad told him about Lord Ram. This is how the grand and magnificent story of the Ramayan was revealed.

(d) The “Giddha”: Jatau was a vulture by birth, but a great devotee of Lord Ram. When Ravana was rushing towards Lanka on his chariot with Sita as captive, it was Jatau who had fought fiercely with him in an attempt to rescue Sita from the demon’s clutches. But ultimately Ravana had cut off his wings, and so the unfortunate Jatau fell down on the ground, mortally wounded. He kept repeating the holy Name of Lord Ram and managed to hold on to his life till the time the Lord came there in his search of Sita. Jatau told the Lord about Ravana stealing Sita and proceeding towards Lanka in the south direction. Then Jatau left his mortal coil while Lord Ram held him in his arms, caressing him and wiping his wounds with his own hands and using the plaits of his long hairs. When Jatau died, the Lord did his last rites himself—a privilege that no one else except one other character, i.e. Sabari, had got in the whole story of the Ramayana. Even Dasrath, who was the worldly father of the Lord, was denied this honour when he died at Ayodhya after the Lord was sent to exile in the forest because at that time only Bharat and Shatrughan were present in the city, and so his last rites were performed by Bharat. This episode is narrated in all the versions of the Ramayana, e.g. in the Ram Charit Manas of Tulsidas, in its Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 29 right upto Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 33.

It ought to be noted here that prior to this, Lord Ram has met Jatau earlier in the forest and befriended him. Jatau was a friend of Dasrath, and he had assured the Lord that he will stay in close proximity with them (Ram, Sita and Laxman) in the forest to keep a vigilant eye and give them protection to the best of his might—this is narrated in the Adhyatma Ramayan of sage Veda Vyas, Aranya Kand, Canto 4, verse nos. 1-7. This fact is also endorsed by Tulsidas in Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 12, stanza no. 2.

The glorious way that Jatau died has been lauded and applauded by Tulsidas in Dohawali verse nos. 222-227. Refer also to Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse nos. 12-16.

“Lord Ram lifted Jatau onto his lap and washed his wounds with the tears streaming from his (Ram’s) eyes”—this is said in Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 13, stanza no. 1, while Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 30 says that “the Lord moved his loving hand carrassingly on his head”.

Jatau’s special death which made him a subject of jealousy and envy for all other exalted persons as narrated in the Doha above has one unique aspect—inspite of him being a vulture by birth and body, he was given an honour befitting a father by none else than the Supreme Being (Lord Ram) himself when the Lord performed his last rites himself—refer: (i) Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 16, stanza no. 4; verse no. 14, stanza no. 1; (ii) Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 32; (iii) Kavitaawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 16, line no. 3; (iv) Doha no. 227 of Dohawali; (v) Vinai Patrika, verse no. 164, stanza no. 2; verse no. 138, stanza no. 3, line no. 1.

Vinai Patrika, verse no. 138, stanza no. 3, line no. 1 says that Lord Ram offered a ‘Pinda’, a ball of cereals that is offered to the soul of one’s departed parent, to Jatau after the bird left its physical body.

Doha no. 227 of Dohawali clearly says “Lord Sri Ram, who is an ocean of graciousness and mercy, performed the last rites of Jatau with a devotion and fervour which was ten times more than what he had for his own father Dasrath, and having done so, he, along with his brother Laxman, gravely mourned his (Jatau’s) death.”

The remarkable thing is that Lord Ram has called Jatau ‘his father’ in clear terms in Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 15, stanza no. 1 when the Lord requests Jatau to live a little longer for some more days so that he (Ram) can enjoy his

company as a father and becomes privileged to receive his blessings as a son gets from his father.

Dohawali's Doha no. 233 says—"Upon hearing the news of how Jatau, the king of vultures, had died, the great ascetics, the Karmayogis (those who do their duties in a righteous manner), the devotees, the wise-men, the sages, the mystics, the hermits, the higher and lower borns, et al—in short, all living beings became jealous of him on the one hand, and praised him and applauded him for the auspicious death he got."

When people came to know how Jatau had died while being caressed by Lord Ram as he lay cradled in the Lord's arms, and how the Lord had himself performed his last rites, they all praised Jatau and wished that they too could die the same way. They all became convinced that of all the living beings on earth, no one was as fortunate and lucky as Jatau—because all those who have taken a birth must die, but it's rarer than the rarest occasion when the Supreme Being himself comes down walking upto a dying man to move his divine hands on his head, to cradle the dying man in his arms, and to do his last rites with his own hands. Their becoming 'jealous' is a figure of speech to emphasise how much they envied Jatau because envy is a sort of praise and honour. One becomes envious of another person only when the latter has something that is highly praiseworthy and valuable, and which the other person who is jealous does not have nor expects to have any time in the future.

Jealousy and envy is an indirect way of immense praise. One is not jealous of an evil character in a person, because such character is denounced by the society. One is jealous and envious of a person only if he possesses some noble virtue or skill or asset for which the world lauds him and applauds him.

Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 13, stanza no. 4 explicitly says that when Lord Ram asked Jatau that if he wished to live then the Lord can grant him a longer life, Jatau had replied—"Lord, well, tell me one thing—to be in the presence of the Supreme Lord at the time of death is most difficult even for great ascetics and sages to achieve, and this magnificent opportunity has come to me out of its own free will. Where will I get it again? I will not be cheated of this golden chance by bargaining it for a life that is nonetheless transient, mortal, false, deluding and decayable. Therefore, I do not wish to live any longer!"

Then again, in Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 15, stanza no. 4, Jatau says—"Oh Lord, believe me. My death is so honourable and desirable that not even the four commendable noble fruits that the scriptures say one gets by living a life of full auspiciousness and righteousness (i.e. the rewards of Artha—worldly prosperity and well-being, Dharma—honour that comes with being rightful and righteous), Kaam—fulfilment of all desires, and Moksha—spiritual liberation and deliverance) can ever compare with it. Tell me, is there any such other honourable and divine reward more desirable than the way I am dying?" Lord Ram was left speechless, for he had no answer to this question!

What other factor, besides the fact that Jatau died in the arms of the Supreme Being, made his death so desirable and laudable? He had died in a selfless manner serving the Lord in trying to protect Sita, Lord Ram's honourable wife, from the clutches of the demon Ravana who had abducted her and was taking her away to his city of Lanka. 'Selfless service' is one of the greatest deeds for a person to do, and this single action of Jatau made him perfectly eligible for immediate deliverance upon death. In other words, if one dies doing selfless service, and offers his services to the Lord God while actually undertaking the exercise, then his emancipation and

salvation is a surety. Such a creature is praised by all the saints and sages—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 84.

In Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 27, Angad praised Jatau when he said—“There is no one more praiseworthy and honourable than Jatau in this world. He is most adorable because he had left his mortal body in the selfless service of Lord Ram, and had gone to the divine abode of Lord Hari (Vishnu) after death.”

Nothing is in-accessible or un-attainable for a creature who has the good of others in his heart, who thinks for the welfare of others, and who is not selfish—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 31.

Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 16, stanza no. 3 says that “the king of vultures assumed a divine form and went to heaven after bowing at the holy feet of Lord Ram and enshrining the Lord’s beautiful and holy image in his heart even as he heard his own glories and those of the Lord’s being sung all around in the world”.

Doha no. 224 of Dohawali says “So many have died till now; so many are dying at present; and so many will die in the future with the passage of time—but till today, and not ever in the future, will anyone get the privilege of dying the way Jatau had died. (224)”

(e) The “Gaja”: In the ancient country of Dravid (the present day South India), there was a kingdom called Pandyaraaj whose king was named Indradumna. He was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu and used to offer regular worship to the Lord with great diligence. Once, sage Agastya passed that way with his retinue of disciples. The king was so engrossed in the worship of the Lord that he did not notice the sage and neither did he get up to welcome him or pay his obeisance to him. This annoyed the sage and he cursed—‘You are like a haughty and wild elephant who pays no heed to those standing in the front. Therefore, you deserve to become an elephant—so you would take a birth as an elephant.’ When the king died he became an elephant in a pleasant island in the middle of the Kshirsagar, the celestial ocean of milk.

He had a majestic body and was very strong in his herd. Once he was playing with his she-elephants and companions in a large and beautiful pond. In this pond lived an alligator/crocodile who was actually a Gandharva (a semi-god) named Huhu in his previous life and had become an alligator due to a curse of sage Deval. The alligator /crocodile caught hold of the leg of the elephant and started pulling him inside the deep lake. The Gaja himself and all his companions tried their best but failed to free him from the mouth of the alligator. A long tussle followed and the elephant became completely exhausted. When the situation became so bad that the Gaja, the elephant, was about to sink fully inside the water, he broke a lotus flower and offered it to Lord Vishnu as his last worship and offering before dying. The merciful Lord rushed instantly astride his mount, called the Garud, to save him. Reaching the spot within a moment, the Lord pulled the Gaja out of the water with one hand, and with the other he opened the mouth of the alligator to yank the leg of the elephant free from its clutches. Then the Lord cut off the alligator’s head with his circular weapon known as the Chakra.

Both the alligator/crocodile and the elephant found liberation—the alligator/crocodile reverted to his earlier form of a Gandharva, and Gaja the elephant assumed a divine form similar to that of the Lord and went to his abode in the heaven.

(f) The “Kirats”, the “Guhas”, the “Nishads”, the “Bhils” etc.—When Lord Ram lived in the forest, these tribals and forest dwelling people had served the Lord in many

ways. The company of the Lord and service rendered to him had purified these souls for all times to come. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 88—to Doha no. 89; (ii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 135—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 137; (iii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 250—to Chanda line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 251.]

रघुबंस भूषन चरित यह नर कहहिं सुनहिं जे गावहीं । ५ ।
 कलि मल मनोमल धोइ बिनु श्रम राम धाम सिधावहीं ॥ ६ ॥
 सत पंच चौपाई मनोहर जानि जो नर उर धरै । ७ ।
 दारुन अबिद्या पंच जनित बिकार श्रीरघुबर हरै ॥ ८ ॥

raghubansa bhūṣana carita yaha nara kahahim sunahim jē gāvahim. 5.
 kali mala manōmala dhō'i binu śrama rāma dhāma sidhāvahim. 6.
 sata pañca caupā'īm manōhara jāni jō nara ura dharai. 7.
 dārūna abidyā pañca janita bikāra śrīraghubara harai. 8.

Those people who narrate, hear and praise or sing to others this glorious story describing the life, the time and the mystical deeds done by Lord Ram who was like an ornament who adorned¹ the line of great kings descending from King Raghu of Ayodhya --- (Chanda line no. 5)

--- Such people are able to effortlessly wash-off or eliminate all the sins and their evil consequences that are prevalent in the present corrupt era of Kaliyug, as well as destroy all the spiritual taints and negativities that dominate their Mana (i.e. their mind-intellect, their subconscious, their heart and their inner-self) during this time, and as a reward are able to attain the divine abode of Lord Ram (i.e. go to heaven; find liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death; attain oneness with the Supreme Being) without any hassles². (Chanda line no. 6)

What more can be said about the glories and mystical powers of this divine and holy story of the Lord other than saying that if one remembers even five or seven of its Chaupais (verses or stanzas) and reverentially enshrines them in his Mana (heart and mind), treating them as representative of the whole beautiful story, and being as sacred and delightful as the latter³, --- (Chanda line no. 7)

--- Then it is sure and certain that Lord Raghubir (Lord Ram) would eliminate all sorts of grave horrors arising out of delusions and ignorance that afflict a mortal being whose body is made of the five elements⁴, thereby providing the living being with eternal beatitude. (Chanda line no. 8)

[Note—¹The phrase “to be like an ornament of the race of kings descending from Raghu” means that Lord Ram was the most exalted, outstanding, honoured, revered, glorious and famous King amongst all the descendants of King Raghu of Ayodhya.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (i) Baal Kand, Doha no. 15 along with Chaupai line nos. 9-10 that precede it; and (ii) Uttar Kand, Doha no. 128.

³By saying that if one commits to heart and memory even any ‘five or seven random Chaupais’ of the glorious story of Lord Ram then one would get the same spiritual benefit as one gets by hearing the entire story it is meant that each verse of this holy Book is important and all of them are equally rewarding. It also means that this Book caters to a wide range of likings and tastes of different types of people with varying mentalities and temperaments.

Since all the verses basically revolve around the life and time of Lord Ram, their focus is the Lord himself, and therefore by remembering any given set of these verses, which the devotee is free to choose according to his own preferences, his mind would be remembering the Lord at any given point of time during the day, albeit in a subtle and indirect form. But just like the case of a correct medicine proving effective in curing a disease irrespective of the way it is administered, the mere remembrance of the Supreme Being by remembering some of the things related to the Lord would be effective in granting the necessary spiritual reward to the devotee.

So everyone has been given a choice so that each individual can easily pick and choose that part of the story of Lord Ram that appeals to his heart and mind the most. This helps to keep him interested, inspired and motivated. Otherwise there are fair chances that he would feel bored after a certain point of time and think that listening to the whole story again and again is not only time consuming but also needless for him after he has heard it once and knows it fully; it would seem a futile exercise to him in this world of hectic humdrum life.

Let us take some instances to illustrate this concept. (a) If one is interested to find out how to find liberation and deliverance, he can choose from any of these sample verses: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 126 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it, and Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precede Doha no. 130 (where sage Kaagbhusund advises Garud on this theme).

(b) If Bhakti (devotion) is the theme that interest him, he can prefer to remember the following verses: Ram Charit Manas, (i) Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 35—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 36 (where Lord Ram has described the nine types of Bhakti to Sabari); or (ii) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 45—to Doha no. 46 (where Lord Ram has described Bhakti to the citizens of Ayodhya).

(c) If one wishes to worship the cosmic form of the Lord as the Viraat Purush, then he would like to recall these verses: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 80—to Doha no. 82 (where Lord Ram has shown this mysterious form to Kaagbhusund).

(d) If one’s liking is the atmosphere of festival and celebrations, he can remember these verses: Ram Charit Manas, (i) Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 194—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 196 (where Lord Ram’s birth is being celebrated in Ayodhya); or (ii) Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 262—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 265 (that describe the celebrations at the time when Lord Ram broke the Bow and married Sita); or (iii) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 3—to Doha no. 4 (that describe celebrations in Ayodhya when Lord Ram returned home at the end of his fourteen-years of forest sojourn).

(e) If one is interested in knowing how to physically serve the Lord, he can recall how the forest dwellers had did so in these sample verses: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-7 that precede Doha no. 88 (the way Guha served the Lord); (ii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 114—to Chaupai line

no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 115 (the way ordinary village folk honoured Lord Ram); (iii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 135—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 137, and Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 250—to Doha no. 251 (the way the forest tribals such as the Kols, the Kriats, the Bhils etc served the Lord).

(f) If one's heart is moved by the bewitching sight of Lord Ram moving through the many villages and hamlets on his way the forest, he has ample choice too: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 109—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 124.

(g) If one is interested in offering prayers to the Lord, there are countless choices here too: for instance, there are many prayers offered by the different Gods as narrated in Ram Charit Manas, (i) Baal Kand, Chanda that precedes Doha no. 186 (where the Gods have prayed to Lord Vishnu); (ii) Baal Kand, Chanda that precedes Doha no. 192 (prayer when Lord Ram was born as a human child); (iii) Lanka Kand, Chanda that precedes Doha no. 111—to Doha no. 115 (when the war of Lanka ended and the Lord became victorious), (iv) and again in Uttar Kand, Chand that precedes Doha no. 13—to Doha no. 14 (where the Vedas and Lord Shiva have offered their obeisance to the Lord).

(h) If one wants to focus his mind singularly on serving Lord Ram even if it means sacrificing everything else, there are examples of Sita, Laxman and Bharat as illustrated in the following verses: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 64—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 68 (with regard to Sita); (ii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 70—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 73 (with regard to Laxman); and (iii) Sortha/Doha no. 176—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 184 (with regard to Bharat).

The list is endless, and the basic idea to cite the above examples here is that the choices are unlimited for a devotee of Lord Ram for him to remember any given set of verses that appeals to his heart and mind.

⁴The 'five-fold' elements that constitute the body of all living beings are sky, air, fire, water and earth. They combine to create a gross body which becomes victim of delusions. The Jiva, the living being, forgets who he actually is—i.e. due to delusions he forgets that his 'true self' is not his physical gross body but his soul or Atma that is a sublime and subtle entity known as 'pure consciousness', and it is a microcosmic form of the Supreme Consciousness known as the Parmatma. Ignorance of this fact is the cause of all miseries and spiritual troubles of a Jiva. When Lord Ram becomes graceful on a person, this delusion and its attendant ignorance are removed, resulting in attainment of eternal joy and bliss of self-realisation. An enlightened and wisened person would then become dispassionate towards the false charms of the body and the world around him, and instead would focus his attention in attaining oneness with the cosmic Atma. This translates into his attaining liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation.

Ignorance caused by delusions leads to the following errors of perception: (i) treating that which is unreal and untrue as being real and true; (ii) erroneously treating that which is perishable and mortal as being imperishable and immortal or eternal; (iii) hankering for things that seem to give pleasure in the short term but actually cause excessive miseries and pain in the long run; (iv) treating that which is actually impure as being pure; (v) to mistakenly acquire things that ought to have been otherwise discarded or abandoned.]

सुंदर सुजान कृपा निधान अनाथ पर कर प्रीति जो । ९ ।
 सो एक राम अकाम हित निर्बानप्रद सम आन को ॥ १० ॥
 जाकी कृपा लवलेस ते मतिमंद तुलसीदासहूँ । ११ ।
 पायो परम बिश्रामु राम समान प्रभु नाही कहूँ ॥ १२ ॥

sundara sujāna kṛpā nidhāna anātha para kara prīti jō. 9.
 sō ēka rāma akāma hita nirbānaprada sama āna kō. 10.
 jākī kṛpā lavalēsa tē matimanda tulasīdāsaḥūṁ. 11.
 pāyō parama biśrāmu rāma samāna prabhu nāhīṁ kahūṁ. 12.

The only Lord who is most charming and sweet, who is most erudite, sagacious, wise and intelligent, who is a treasury of mercy and compassion, who shows grace and munificence upon those who are helpless and hapless destitutes --- (Chanda line no. 9)

--- Is no one else but Lord Ram! Indeed, in all sooth and without gainsay, there is no other Lord who is as selfless as Lord Ram, who would do good to others without having any expectation (or even a 'thanks') in return, and who would selflessly and willingly provide final liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation to the soul of a creature (if at all the creature prays to the Lord for this spiritual blessing). (Chanda line no. 10)

Verily indeed, even a most humble, dull-witted and incompetent person like Tulsidas, who was fortunate to be blessed by a tiny fraction of the Lord's enormous grace, kindness, mercy, benevolence and munificence --- (Chanda line no. 11)

---Found eternal bliss and peace for himself—surely then there is no Lord like Lord Ram anywhere in this creation¹! (Chanda line no. 12)

[Note—¹Tulsidas basically says that if Lord Ram is so merciful and gracious that he took excellent care of such a good-for-nothing person like him (Tulsidas), then it is sure that there is no better or large-hearted Lord than Lord Ram anywhere in this world. Everyone is selfish; all Lords or Masters favour those servants who are of any use to them. But no one bothers about those who serve no good, are dumb and stupid. It is only Lord Ram who takes special care of those who are unfortunate and who have no one else to care for them. The best part is that Lord Ram does not even expect a 'thanks' in return—so selfless and gracious he is!]

दो०. मो सम दीन न दीन हित तुम्ह समान रघुबीर ।
 अस बिचारि रघुबंस मनि हरहु बिषम भव भीर ॥ १३० (क) ॥

dōhā.

mō sama dīna na dīna hita tumha samāna raghubīra.
 asa bicāri raghubansa mani harahu biṣama bhava bhīra. 130 (a).

[Tulsidas says—] ‘Oh Lord Ram (Raghubir)! There is no one as miserable, humble and lowly as I am, and there is no one (in this world) except thee who is a greater and a better benefactor and well-wisher of such people.

Keeping this glorious virtue and grand reputation of thine in mind, oh gracious Lord Ram who is like a gem in the race of King Raghu (of Ayodhya), thou should free me from the great miseries and horrors and terror of transmigration in this mortal world, from which I feel sore affright. (Doha no. 130-a)

कामिहि नारि पिआरि जिमि लोभिहि प्रिय जिमि दाम ।
तिमि रघुनाथ निरंतर प्रिय लागहु मोहि राम ॥ १३० (ख) ॥

kāmihi nāri pi'āri jimi lōbhihi priya jimi dāma.
timi raghunātha nirantara priya lāgahu mōhi rāma. 130 (b).

Not only this, please also bless me oh Lord so that thou must be as constantly dear to me as a woman is to a lustful and passionate man, or wealth and riches are to a miserly and greedy man!¹ (Doha no. 130-b)

[¹Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 12 that precedes Doha no. 31

A similar idea is expressed in verse no. 269 of the Book of Prayers called ‘Vinai Patrika’ by Goswami Tulsidas. An English version of this wonderful Book has been published separately by this humble author.

It’s a very interesting verse, so let’s quote it here:

“rāma kabahum^ṃ priya lāgihau jaisē nīra mīnakō?
sukha jīvana jyōm jīvakō, manī jyōm phanikō hita,
jyōm dhana lōbha-līnakō. 1.
jyōm subhāya priya lagati nāgarī nāgara navīnakō.
tyōm mērē mana lālasā kariyē karunākara!
pāvana prēma pīnakō. 2.
manasākō dātā kahaim śruti prabhu pravīnakō.
tulasidāsa kō bhāvatō, bali jā'um^ṃ dayānidhi!
dījai dāna dīnakō. 3.

“Verse no. 269—Oh Lord Sri Ram! Will I ever have as much affection, love and endearment for you (a) as the fish has for the water (“kabahum^ṃ priya lāgihau jaisē nīra mīnakō”; the fish cannot survive detached from the water), (b) as the creature loves a life of comfort and happiness (“sukha jīvana jyōm jīvakō”; the creature tries all dirty tricks to get comfort and happiness in life), (c) as the serpent loves the ‘Mani’ (“manī jyōm phanikō hita”; the Mani is a luminiscent sac formed by secretions from the glands on the hood of a special type of snake; if the sac is removed it is said that the snake dies), and (d) as a great greedy miser loves his wealth (“jyōm dhana lōbha-līnakō”; for a miser, everything else in the world is secondary as compared to his pennies) (1).

Or else, even as a young actor is naturally attracted towards a young, clever and beautiful actress (jyōm subhāya priya lagati nāgarī nāgara navīnakō), oh Lord who shows mercy and compassion (karunākara), please produce (or develop) in my mind and heart (i.e. my inner-self) an intense desire (tyōm mērē mana lālasā kariyē) for drinking the nectar symbolised by having exclusive love and devotion for you that is of the purest kind, that is intense, truthful, steady, abiding and eternal by its inherent nature (pāvana prēma pīnakō). {Oh Lord, let it be so that I love and have affection for no one else except you; let me be devoted to you and no one else.} (2).

The Vedas assert (kahaim śruti) that the Lord fulfills all the wishes and desires (that arise in the heart of his devotees and those who come to him seeking something—“manasākō dātā”), and that the Lord is very clever and proficient towards that end (prabhu pravīnakō). {To wit, the Lord understands one's needs and desires even without speaking or asking for them specifically. So the Lord fulfills them on his own by merely approaching the Lord and submitting one's self before the Lord.}

Oh an abode of mercy, compassion, kindness and grace (dayānidhi)! I earnestly beseech you, I sincerely plead before you (bali jā'um) to give as alms the things which Tulsidas wishes in his heart (tulasidāsa kō bhāvatō, dijai dāna dīnakō). {And, what does he want? For an answer, refer verse nos. 267, 268 among others. In brief, Tulsidas wants nothing else but to have everlasting love and devotion for Lord Ram and faith in the Lord's holy name.} (4).”]

श्लोक. यत्पूर्वं प्रभुणा कृतं सुकविना श्रीशङ्भुना दुर्गमं
श्रीमद्रामपदाब्जभक्तिमनिशं प्राप्त्यै तु रामायणम् ।
मत्वा तद्रघुनाथनामनिरतं स्वान्तस्तमःशान्तये
भाषाबद्धमिदं चकार तुलसीदासस्तथा मानसम् ॥ १ ॥

ślōka.

yatpūrvam prabhuṇā kṛtaṁ sukaṇṇavīnā śrīśambhunā durgamaṁ
śrīmadrāmapadābjabhaktimaniśaṁ prāptyai tu rāmāyaṇam.
matvā tadraghunāthanāmanirataṁ svāntastamaḥśāntayē
bhāṣābad'dhamidaṁ cakāra tulasīdāsastathā mānasam. 1.

The most sagacious and erudite Lord Shiva had first conceived and created this exceedingly mystical and esoteric story of Lord Ram that is known as the “Ramayan” for the exclusive purpose of developing steady devotion and affection for the holy lotus-like feet of Lord Ram, that same divine, holy and sacred story has now been rendered by Tulsidas into a language that is understood by the common man when he realised that this story is infused by or soaked in the spiritual powers of the Lord's holy name that provides liberation, deliverance, bliss and beatitude to a tormented creature's heart, because he (Tulsidas) also wanted to remove the darkness prevailing in his own inner-self and attain this exalted state of existence¹. (Shloka no. 1)

[¹ This is clearly mentioned by him in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 9—to Chaupai line nos. 7 that precedes Doha no. 10; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 9-12 that precede Doha no. 12; (iii) Chaupai line nos. 2-4 that precede Doha no. 31; (iv) Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 34; (v) Chaupai line nos. 7-13 that precede Doha no. 35.]

पुण्यं पापहरं सदा शिवकरं विज्ञानभक्तिप्रदं
मायामोहमलापहं सुविमलं प्रेमाञ्जुपूरं शुभम् ।
श्रीमद्रामचरित्रमानसमिदं भक्त्यावगाहन्ति ये
ते संसारपतङ्गघोरकिरणैर्दहन्ति नो मानवाः ॥ २ ॥

punyaṁ pāpaharaṁ sadā śivakaraṁ vijñānabhaktipradaṁ
māyāmōhamalāpaham suvimalaṁ prēmāmbupūraṁ śubham.
śrīmadrāmacaritamānasamidaṁ bhaktyāvagāhanti yē
tē sansārapataṅghōrakiraṇairdahyanti nō mānavāḥ. 2.

This glorious and blessed story of Lord Ram which is known by the name of “Ram Charit Manas” is an embodiment of auspiciousness, is able to destroy sins and their horrifying effects, is always a bestower of joy, happiness and welfare, grants spiritual wisdom, enlightenment and true knowledge as well as the grand virtues of devotion and affection for the Lord, is a destroyer of the darkness caused by Maya and Moha (delusions and falsehoods leading to infatuation with things that are not real), is the cleaner of impurities sticking to the inner-self of a living being, is filled with a nectar symbolising the purest form of love and devotion for the Supreme Lord.

It is indeed an embodiment of holiness, sacredness, divinity, purity and truth.

Verily indeed, in all sooth and without gainsay, those living beings who take a dip with full faith and devotion in this symbolic lake of spirituality and blessedness should be absolutely sure that they can’t be scorched in the heat of the sun represented by the torments and horrors of this mortal world¹. (Shloka no. 2)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 31—to Doha no. 32.]

इति श्रीमद्रामचरित्रमानसे सकलकलिकलुषविध्वंसने सप्तमः सोपानः समाप्तः ।

iti śrīmadrāmacaritamānasē sakalakalikaluṣavidhvansanē saptamaḥ sōpānaḥ
samāptaḥ.

Thus ends this seventh Canto or Chapter of ‘Ram Charit Manas’ which can destroy all the sins of Kaliyug and their attendant torments. AMEN!!

(end of uttara-kāṇḍa)

About the Author

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia left home when he was approximately 29 years of age due to an inner call of his heart that told him to devote his life in the service of his beloved Lord God, Sri Ram. Worldly attractions did not enchant him at all. So, he didn't marry, and after his father's death he came and settled permanently in Ayodhya, the holy town in India associated with Lord Ram.

Presently he works as an honorary manager of a world famous Kanak Bhavan Temple at Ayodhya, and spends his time writing in English so that the world can access the wonderful nectar of metaphysical, spiritual and devotional philosophy that is contained in Indian scriptures for which they are so renowned.

His English Books published separately by a reputed publisher of India, the details of whom can be had by contacting the author on his email given below, include: (i) The series on '108 Upanishads' in five volumes having eighteen parts, (ii) Veda Vyas' 'Adhyatma Ramayan' in two parts, (iii) 'Devi Puran Ramayan', (iv) Valmiki's 'Adbhut Ramayan', and (v) 'Biography of Lord Ram' based on Tulsidas' books.

Genre of Writing: Spiritualism, Philosophy, Metaphysics, Religious, Devotional and Theological.

The author's Books are available for order online both in 'e-book' format and 'paper-back book' format at following websites—

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Mobile: +91-93508 84227;

Landline phone: +91-114708 4852.

Email: pratibhabooks1@gmail.com

Contact details of Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia—

Postal address:-36-A, Rajghat Colony, Parikrama Marg, P.O.—Ayodhya, Pin—224123, Distt. Ayodhya (Faizabad), U.P. India.

Phone:—(India) +919451290400; +919935613060.

Website: < www.tulsidas-ram-books.weebly.com >

Email of Author: (i) < ajaichhawchharia@gmail.com >

(ii) < ajaikumarbooks@gmail.com >

Archive.org: < https://archive.org/details/@ajai_kumar_chhawchharia >

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